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ABSTRACT

This bulletin was founded at the eleventh World Congress on Reading, held in London in 1986. Its subject is Literacy Education in Asia and its objective is to "enable different National Councils to share information about literacy in their own region and how problems are met." (WTB) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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DECEMBER 1987

ASIAN LITERACY & READING BULLETIN

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Published by the Hong Kong Reading Association
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of the International Reading Association.

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We would like to thank the following persons and institution for making this Bulletin possible: Dr. Phyllis Adams, President, IRA; Dr. James Sawyer, Director of Membership and Council Relations, IRA; the British Council, Hong Kong, for a subsidy of 500 pounds; Mr. Winston Yeung and Mr. Norman Cheung for donations.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF IDA

William Cheng,
International Development in Asia.

It gives me great pleasure to write a few lines for the first issue of the Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin. The concept of producing such a bulletin was first mentioned at the 11th World Congress on Reading held in London last year when three committee members of the Hong Kong Reading Association met some of the Asian leaders. Although no concrete proposals were formulated then, members returned to Hong Kong with ideas about promoting literacy and establishing better links between the various affiliates and national councils in Asia. The first step was to hold a face-to-face meeting with members of the International Development in Asia. The Hong Kong Committee received positive encouragement from IRA through Dr. James Sawyer when he visited Hong Kong in December. Through the co-operation of the Division of Continuing Education of the Hong Kong Baptist College and the help of a number of generous donors, a seminar 'Literacy & Reading in Asia' was held and a number of working sessions were conducted during April 24-27. The Presidents of five Asian councils shared their experiences and aspirations and exchanged views on how to fulfil the charges given by IRA. One proposal was to publish an Asian Literacy and Reading Bulletin which could enable different National Councils to share information about literacy in their own region and how problems are met. We hope that the bulletin will provide a forum for the dissemination of information about the efforts in combating illiteracy, the sharing of research findings and the discussion of cooperative projects. There is a great deal to be done, and a great deal to be known about what has been and is being done. It is my sincere hope that this small beginning will lead to greater cooperation between the different councils in the common goal of promoting literacy in Asia.

Chairman of IDA addressing the Seminar on Literacy & Reading in Asia (From left: Dr. Cheung Yat-shing, Dr. Victoria Rey, Dr. Ng Seok Moi, Mr. William Cheng, Mrs. Neelam Hussain, Dr. Manit Boonprasert)

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MAIN POINTS FROM THE FIRST TWO MEETINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA COMMITTEE 1986–88

The first meeting of the IDA committee for the period 1986-87 was held in Hong Kong on 24 & 25 April 1987. The members present were: William Cheng (Chairing), Manit Boonprasert (Thailand), Neelam Hussain (Pakistan) and Ng Seok Moi (Singapore). Deputising for Nicol M. Miraflores was Victoria Rey (Philippines). Also present were the six members of the Executive Committee of the Hong Kong Reading Association including its President Cheung Yat-shing.

The second meeting of the IDA committee was held in Bangkok on 21 August 1987. Those present were: William Cheng (Chairing), Phylliss Adams (IRA President), Manit Boonprasert (Thailand), Neelam Hussain (Pakistan), Jonathan Anderson (Australia), K. G. Rastogi (India), Siriporn Limtrakarn (Thailand) and Takahiko Sakamoto (Japan).

The main points raised in the first meeting were:

1. Structure of IDAC
   IDA members should outline the projects for the period of appointment at the beginning of each term of office. A suggestion should be forwarded to IRA to request the appointment of members on a 2-year basis to preserve continuity for maximum effectiveness of operation. The members of IDA in each Asian member country should be arranged with the President of the Reading Association concerned.
2. Request for Information from IRA
   Members want to get information on the operation of IRA's other international development committees.
3. Proposal for an Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin to be published initially twice a year by rotation.
4. Proposal for Future Meetings
   A seminar should be held in conjunction with an IDA committee meeting at least once a year. Each member country might take turns to act as the host. A request for subsidy from IRA could be made, expenditure per head being about US$300 for 4 days and three nights minus transportation.

The second meeting continued the discussion begun in the first:

1. Comments on IDA Meeting of 24-25 April 1987 in Hong Kong
   Cheng felt the meeting was useful and hoped that such meetings should be organised more frequently.
2. Asian Reading Bulletin
   Cheng felt there was a need in Asia to focus on reading in ESL as well as reading in the mother tongue; these two areas will be the foci of the Bulletin.
3. Funding
   Adams suggested that IDA committee put in writing a request for IRA to support the publication of the Asian Bulletin while raising an equivalent amount.
4. Suggestions on the Improvement of the Working of the Committee and Fund Raising
   On how to raise funds to support delegates to the Youth Congress, Adams informed the committee that IRA will be requesting funds from UNESCO and other foundations to finance students from outside North America. National councils were urged to do the same. Rastogi suggested creating channels and inexpensive means of making real contact with members. There is a need to develop more programs shared by other countries, e.g. the newspaper reading scheme of IRA was successful in India. Adams recognised the diversity of needs of affiliates; IRA headquarter could supply support in matters of resource persons, materials etc. Anderson informed members that Australia is now included in the Asian division of UNESCO, and assured members that Australia would like to be involved in as many ways as possible in the workings of the committee.
   Sakamoto reviewed IDA's contribution to IRA but added that it was impossible for Japan to host an international conference due to economic and linguistic constraints.
   Adams added that member affiliates have the right to translate any IRA publications.
   Rastogi suggested undertaking collaborative research between Asian affiliates, and that councils should exchange information regularly concerning research. The compilation of a directory of Asian IRA members and scholars doing research in reading was also suggested.
5. Youth Congress Participation
   Adams said information will be forthcoming as to the amount of funds available from IRA to subsidize one member from each country. October will be the deadline for country recommendation to IRA. The criteria are flexible; the participant should be 22-35 years of age, and 'entry level' teachers or students of educational literacy.
6. Charges of Duty of Various Interest Groups and the IDA
   LLA was a special interest group in charge of its own membership, governance and activities. IDA committee was authorised by and had specific charges outlined by IRA. Only IDA was eligible for funding.
   An overlap of activities of LLA and IDA was inevitable but a flexible approach could be used to develop cooperation between them.
7. Closing Remarks
   Adams commended the working of the committee. Cheng thanked her on behalf of IDA. Anderson suggested the committee meet again in Brisbane, Australia during the 1988 World Congress on Reading.

(extracted from the minutes of the two meetings which were taken respectively by Kitty Kwan, and Neelam Hussain and Martin Benson.)

Asian reading leaders with executive committee members of the Hong Kong Reading Association (From left, standing: Ms. Rebecca Wai, Miss Kitty Kwan, Dr. Cheung Yat-shing, Mr. William Cheng, Mr. Yu Fong-ying, Mr. Kwong Chi-hung, Miss Priscilla Yeung; seated: Mrs. Neelam Hussain, Dr. Ng Seok Moi, Dr. Manit Boonprasert, Dr. Victoria Rey)

✲ *CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS* ✲

Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin aims at serving Asian reading educators and administrators at all levels. We welcome contributions such as accounts of literacy and reading programmes, analysis of issues, research reports, and announcements of future events connected with reading. While the focus of the Bulletin is on Asia, articles with general significance and application will find a welcome place. Contributions should normally be not more than two thousand words, and accompanied by a brief biographical note. The deadline for the next issue will be **31 March 1988.**

A LITERACY PROFILE OF PAKISTAN

Neelam Hussain,
Ex-President of the Lahore Reading Council.

The General Situation

An analysis of literacy in Pakistan from 1951-87 indicates a very low literacy rate along with low enrollment patterns in primary and especially secondary education. This characteristic co-relates with an extremely limited availability of skilled personnel of all kinds and as a result the country suffers from a diminished capacity to organize and manage developmental tasks.

In the past, development tasks were few and fairly simple requiring mainly physical labour and unquestioning compliance from the people. However governments of today expect their people to show initiative and to participate actively in the development of their country. They want their people to acquire progressive attitudes to farming, health care, saving, spending, industry and education – in short all aspects of modern-day living. It is a well recognised fact that if governments are to succeed in their development efforts they must ensure that their people are literate and are able to understand development programmes and participate in them intelligently.

Pakistan therefore today faces the gigantic challenge of eradicating illiteracy in the country in order to function effectively in the age of technology.

The official figures for literacy indicate that during the period 1951-81 the literacy rate has increased from 16.4% to 26.2%. Thus only a 11% increase has been achieved during a span of three decades. There are sharp differences in rural and urban literacy rates. The ratio swings from 55.3% for urban males to a distressingly low 7.3% for rural females showing a seven-and-a-half-fold difference. There are also differences among the four provinces, namely Sind, Punjab, N.W.F.P., and Baluchistan. Sind has the highest literacy ratio (31.5%) followed by the Punjab (27.4%), the N.W.F.P. (16.7%) and Baluchistan (10.3%). Islamabad, the Federal capital of the country, is the only administrative area where the majority of the population is literate.

Out of 13 million people with some level of education, 46% have passed primary education, 23% middle and 20% matriculation. After matriculation the percentage falls to 5.9% for intermediate, 3.8% for B.A./B.Sc., i.e., the degree courses and only 1% for M.A./M.Sc., post-graduate degree courses. The percentage of engineering and medical graduates is 0.28 and 0.25 respectively and 0.28 for the law graduates.

Female and Child Illiteracy

The Literacy and Mass Education Commission has defined the literate as being those persons who can read and write a simple statement (e.g., a letter) in any regional language of Pakistan. The literate should also be able to count and write numbers and do simple calculations. It is evident that a simple criterion has been established by the Commission for Mass Education to confirm literacy in a person. Despite this, three out of four persons in Pakistan are illiterate.

Females constitute the largest group of illiterates in Pakistan, and according to the 1981 Census, literacy rate amongst females in the country was only 16% and that of rural females as low as 7.3%. There are areas in Pakistan where female literacy is nominal. In rural Baluchistan for instance it is 1.8%. Prevalent attitudes and lack of awareness amongst both males and females aggravate female literacy.

Findings of workshops on female literacy indicate that women generally carry a low self-image in a patriarchal society like Pakistan, and therefore have low aspirations. The media also does not enhance their self-concept and needs to change its projection of the role of women in society. Sociocultural constraints have to be systematically removed in order to create a climate for female literacy.

Fig. 1: Literacy Rate by Sex and Rural/Urban Area in Pakistan in 1981 (in %)

Area/Sex	Total	Urban	Rural
TOTAL (PAKISTAN)	23.3	43.4	14.8
Males	31.8	51.5	23.4
Females	13.7	33.7	5.5
PUNJAB			
Total	24.5	43.1	17.3
Males	33.5	51.5	26.4
Females	14.4	33.2	7.4
N.W.F.P.			
Total	14.3	32.1	10.9
Males	22.7	42.8	18.8
Females	4.9	18.8	2.5
SIND			
Total	28.2	46.8	12.7
Males	36.0	53.9	20.8
Females	19.1	38.3	3.4
BALUCHISTAN			
Total	8.2	27.9	4.4
Males	12.5	37.7	7.3
Females	2.9	14.3	0.8

Source: Population Census of Pakistan 1981 Bulletin.

Primary education has been one of the major factors influencing literacy. According to one survey in Pakistan, a little more than 50% of the children of school-going age are enrolled in primary schools. About 50% of these will drop out before acquiring any worthwhile literacy skills. The percentage of enrollment is lower and the drop-out ratio is higher in rural areas, particularly in the case of females. Therefore a great number of children who do not get access to basic education or drop-out before acquiring literacy join the 45 million adult illiterates in the country every year, which adversely affects the literacy figures for Pakistan.

Unfortunately also, because of a high birth rate the number of illiterates is growing. Two to three million children are born every year in Pakistan. Unless some provision is made to absorb them into the formal school system, they will continue to join the ranks of the illiterates in the country.

A Review of On-Going Literacy Programmes

A survey of literacy programmes in Pakistan reveals that there are several on-going literacy programmes, in the four provinces of Pakistan. In Baluchistan however, the scattered population has hindered the spread of literacy. The average distance between villages is about 50 miles. Out of 5,800 villages only 2,600 have primary schools. It is impossible to find female teachers because literacy is low amongst women. However, literacy could be encouraged by the use of mobile schools. A village centre for training village women, where they could learn literacy along with a vocational skill, has been recommended by the Mass Education Commission.

In the North West Frontier Province there are 150 adult education centres. Enrollment is very low. Adults are not interested in literacy per se. They are more interested in skill training for which there is a growing demand. In the rural areas of N.W.F.P. women are not expected to go out of their homes for schooling. Therefore female literacy centres should be initiated in homes and other acceptable places. The literacy programme could be linked with vocational training to encourage female participation.

The Local Government Ordinance in the province of the Punjab entrusts adult education to the Local Bodies. Centres of adult education are established on the recommendation of the Union Councils who also decide their locations. Community involvement is encouraged by the formation of committees at the village level to plan, supervise and manage adult education programmes.

Teachers are trained at the union council level and the secretary of the committee is trained at the Local Government Training Institute at Lala Musa. Mobile teachers are used where educated persons are not available at the local level.

The local teachers and the members of the organization committee identify the adults in the community who will enroll in the literacy programmes. Time and place for teaching is decided after consultation with teachers. The curriculum and materials are produced by the Curriculum Centre Punjab. Each centre is provided with maps, charts, posters and follow-up materials. Most centres receive financial support from the Women's Division (a wing of the central government which was created to advance the cause of women in Pakistan), and special model centres for female literacy have been established.

The Adult Basic Education Society of Gujranwala was established in 1948. A.B.E.S. is a private non-profit organization supported through private donations, community support, foreign aid-giving agencies and sale of books the society produces. To initiate a programme, the local leaders are first motivated. Generally, local councillors support programmes of the society. The programme has a low drop-out rate (about 19%). The centres are closely supervised. Teachers are chosen from within the community, so that absenteeism is minimized. The criteria for hiring teachers is flexible. Honorarium is paid promptly. Each centre is provided with a television set and the teacher-student ratio is reasonable. The duration of the programme is for a period of six months after which the programme is formally closed, and a box of library books is placed at the learning centre for the newly literate.

The literacy programme of the Family Planning Association of Pakistan is somewhat akin to that of A.B.E.S. The F.P.A.P. initiates a simple and inexpensive welfare programme which the community can run independently. Success depends upon community involvement. The field workers of F.P.A.P. study the community before designing and launching a programme. The programmes are initiated through local leadership by involving community leaders. Linkages are established between development (including basic education) and family planning.

The Allama Iqbal Open University at Islamabad has been experimenting with a series of pilot projects on literacy. The University has developed projects for the production of literacy materials along with the training of personnel. The programme design, curriculum and materials are prepared in accordance with local requirements. The duration of the literacy programme is six months and it is funded by AIOU and UNICEF. Primary school teachers are used as resource persons. This programme focuses on social education, productive skills and literacy.

An Experimental Pilot Project, Integrating Education with Rural Development, has been initiated and includes in its target population primary-school-age drop-outs. This project aims at providing low cost, functional education which would lead to an improvement in the life style of the poor people in rural areas. Educational programmes are designed after assessing the needs of the target population and the resources of the community in question. Low-cost primary education (which includes mosque

schools for boys and neighbourhood schools for girls) is being provided. Skill training centres for women have been initiated and these teach farming, health, nutrition, mother and child care and other productive skills. Village workshop schools for skill training have been set up for youth who are not in school. About 30 villages have been covered by this programme. This project has not been evaluated so far.

The Adult Functional Literacy Project of Pakistan Television Corporation presents lessons related to literacy, numeracy, social relationships, health, nutrition, agricultural economics and management. According to the evaluation of the 6th Cycle (which ended May 1981) some 20,000 students, both men and women, derived literacy and other basic practical skills from this programme. Some 142,000 to 172,000 adults benefitted from this programme through private viewing arrangements.

A 10-15 minute programme on literacy, entitled 'Alif Ujala' is being broadcast daily from all stations of Radio Pakistan. This broadcast aims at motivating people to acquire literacy.

LAMEC, or the Literacy and Mass Education Committee, was established by the Government of Pakistan primarily to improve the low literacy rate in the country. The government felt the need to supplement formal education with a non-formal approach. A National Literacy Programme was started by LAMEC in 1985. A three-year model project, it continued to work till 1986 and was implemented in nine districts in the country. The first year's target was roughly half a million people. Instead the Commission was able to impart literacy to only 18,000 people. The Commission had calculated spending Rs. 140 on making a person literate. Instead they ended up actually spending over Rs. 3,000 per person, so the plan seemed to have met with very little success. The government decided to call off the programme. All the schools were closed formally on September 30, 1986.

Why did the programme fail? One of the reasons ascertained by LAMEC is that teachers were paid a meagre honorarium of Rs. 250 per month. This was not enough for them to devote full time to their jobs and motivate uneducated people to come and study. There was no effective way of monitoring these schools or teachers. The schools were in different villages, sometimes spread over a distance of 10 miles – working at different timings according to the needs of the residents. It became impossible for a supervisor working at a salary of Rs. 500 to go and check all the schools running under his supervision. Some of these schools did not actually exist in reality. The whole scheme eventually became only a paper exercise. This resulted in the failure of the National Literacy Scheme initiated by LAMEC in 1985.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister of Pakistan annouced his Five-Point Programme, which aimed at doubling the literacy rate in the country in the next four years. This meant not only more work in the formal primary education section but also increased efforts in the adult education section. (The Ministry of Education decided that about 150 million illiterate persons [illegible] to be educated through adult education programmes). A Pilot Project 'Iqra' was devised to be run in Rawalpindi and Islamabad districts. It would use a new plan – and approach not yet tested anywhere in the world. Along side this, another scheme was to be launched, to attract those students who had left primary education midway due to social of financial problems. This was named the 'Nai Roshni Scheme'. According to this scheme, 22,000 new centres were to be opened. These centres would run afternoon classes in the existing schools. The teachers would be regular Primary teachers. For every 10 centres there would be a supervisor. At the Tehsil level there be a Tehsil literacy inspector. There would be a district project manager at the district level and a divisional literacy manager at each division. A resident director would continue to function at the provincial level.

The aim of the 'Nai Roshni Scheme' is to enroll a maximum of 25 students at each centre with separate classes for boys and girls. This is basically a rural-oriented scheme. These centres were to start functioning in February this year. The reason for the delay is the non-availability of fully trained teachers in the required numbers -- trained to teach the new 'microscope syllabus'. This four-year project hopes to enroll 1.6 million students.

The budget for this project for four years is Rs. 3,100 million. There will be no foreign aid. Monetary incentives are being planned to motivate teachers. It has been proposed that a teacher be awarded a cash bonus for every student he makes literate.

In order to encourage literacy an Ordinance was passed in 1985, and according to it no illiterate will be issued a passport, nor will any illiterate get employment with any federal institution or agency.

Conclusion

An analysis of the slow progress made in literacy eradication clearly points at poor monitoring and lack of motivation on the part of the administrators, teachers and students. If the plan had been closely monitored at all stages of implementation, it would have been possible to identify weaknesses and correct them promptly. As for public motivation this has to be created and not taken for granted. Public motivation cannot be greater than the importance the sponsors themselves attach to the project in terms of commitment. However, governmental support and funding alone will not suffice to bring about an appreciable rise in the literacy rate in Pakistan. Literacy efforts have to have a social rather than a bureaucratic base.

The purpose of our literacy programmes should be to impart literacy skills within the development context.

Neoliterates should not only be able to read, write and acquire basic arithmetic skills but they should be able to cognize and participate at a basic level in the national development effort as responsible citizens. Literacy education will have to reach the population in the village – we need to go to them – study their problems – induce them to get educated. The change agents, motivators and catalysts appointed to do the job need incentives in order to work with commitment.

Future planning for literacy enhancement will have to consider creative alternatives to the rather traditional practices in vogue. Appropriate teaching materials including suitable primers need to be developed. Existing primers should be development-oriented and according to the every day vocabulary of the illiterates. Learning should be made an interesting real process by depicting experiences that relate to the reader's life.

Deveopment of a core vocabulary of a maximum of 2,000 words should be encouraged. This vocabulary should be used for the primer, classroom instruction and in written follow-up materials. Tangible goals should be outlined for the completion of the course. Provision must be made to provide suitable low-cost reading materials for post-literacy reading.

Inter-sectoral linkages should be streamlined and strengthened for the effective implementation of literacy programmes. Research and evaluation of the effectiveness of a programme should be an on-going component of the strategy to eradicate illiteracy. Cost-effectiveness must also be reviewed often. In short co-ordination and inter-agency co-operation should begin at federal and reach grass-root levels, and should be an important component of literacy planning.

Pakistan has four provinces, each having its own provincial language. Each province needs to be planned for individually — to some extent — keeping in mind its unique problems and needs. Literacy curricula will have to accommodate provincial needs in order to encourage literacy in the provinces.

Pakistan, like the rest of the world, is today confronted with urbanization, industrialization, the information explosion and all the complexities that characterize the atomic age. However, the majority of Pakistanis have yet to acquire basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills which are essential to meet the simplest demands of modern living. There is an urgent need to come to grips with the problems that accrue from the complexities of modern life. Time is running out for us as a nation. We must commit ourselves now to the promotion of education and literacy in the next decade.

INDIA'S NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

K. G. Rastogi,
National Council of Educational Research & Training, India.

India, one of the biggest countries and perhaps the biggest democracy in the world, has an area of 3,287,263 sq. kms. It is administratively and politically constituted of 24 states and 7 union territories. The projected total population in 1986 is 758 millions: the population of children of the age group 6-14 is 164 millions and the population of adults of the age group 16-35 is 267 millions.

Article 45 of the Indian Constitution prescribes universal education for all children up to the age of 14. This target should have been achieved by 1960, but it could not be achieved with the result that India in 1987 has more than 1,000 lakh illiterate persons in the age group 15-35. One should clearly differentiate between an 'illiterate' and an 'uneducated' person. India has a lot of traditional wisdom to fall back upon which she acquired through ages. However, with all the strength of the traditional wisdom acquired through oral mode it is an admitted fact that a large chunk of Indians are illiterate.

Therefore, realising the need of education through literacy, numeracy and technocracy the Government of India has formulated the National Policy of Education 1986 and has also developed a Programme of Action depicting the strategies, approaches, methods, programmes and activities which will be adopted in order to organise education to achieve the target. The previous National Policy of Education, entitled Report of the Kothari Commission, was drafted in 1968. The two main differences between the 1968 policy and 1986 policy are that the 1968 policy was only an academic document while the 1986 policy and the programme of action are both legal documents approved by the Indian Parliament. Secondly, regarding philosophy and content, it may be said that 1968 policy emphasised Education for Development, while 1986 policy emphasises 'Education for Equality' and 'Equality in Education'.

Education for equality implies the access to education for all without discrimination based on area, caste, creed, religion, colour, sex etc. Accordingly, the dictum 'Education for All' is the guiding principle for this. Secondly, 'Equality in Education' means the education to be given to people should be of the same quality. This shifts the emphasis on enrolment to retention and achievement of the learners. In order to operationalize these two principles, the Central Government has developed a programme entitled 'Operation Blackboard'. The Central Government is going to provide all the primary schools with the necessary building, physical facilities, equipment and teaching aids for the instructional programmes to be organised in the schools. The Central Government is going to provide all these facilities irrespective of the contribution of the states.

In order to achieve the target of educating 431 million persons, 164 million children in 6-14 age group and 267 million adults in 15-35 age group by 2,000 A.D. the country has launched the following three programmes:

1. Formal Education Programme for children of the age group 6-14 years (FEP)
2. Non-formal Education Programme for children of the age group 6-14 years (NFEP)
3. National Adult Education Programme for the age group 15-35 years (NAEP).

The first two programmes for children of the age group 6-14 are complementary and supplementary to each other. They are complementary in the sense that the children who are not able to attend the formal schools for 5/6 hours a day will be covered by the non-formal education programme which is running non-formal education centres for 2 to 3 hours a day in times according to the convenience of the learners. These learners belong to the deprived sections of the Indian society. But they are productive members of the society and useful for themselves, their families and also the society. These children are working either in the organised sectors, e.g. match factories, bangle factories and cement factories or unorganised sectors, such as cattle grazing, tea shops. Some of the children help their parents in their parental vocations and look after their younger brothers and sisters when their parents go for work.

At present about 5 million children are getting education in about 2 hundred thousand NFE centres in the country, with an average of 25 children per centre. But it has been resolved in the 1986 National Policy of Education that by the year 1990 primary education up to grade V will be provided to 640 lakh children out of which 250 lakh children will be covered through formal education and 370 lakh in non-formal education centres.

The NFEP is supplementary to the FEP in the sense that the FEP provides general education to children. But the NFEP, in addition to giving them general education, makes provision for such kind of education which may be immediately useful to their life. Broadly speaking, the NFEP is following two models: the Formal Education Model and the Need and Problem Based Model. The first model equips the children with academic competencies and encourages them to join the formal stream. The Need and Problem Based Model helps the learners in identifying, analysing and understanding their needs and problems and helping them in finding out the solutions of their needs and problems. Again, in the formal education, three different curricula are developed through three different strategies, viz. formal curriculum as such, condensed form of formal curriculum and integrated form of formal curriculum. These are being used in different states in the country.

As the Indian Constitution prescribes universal education for all children up to the age of 14 years, the NFEP is being organised at two levels, viz. lower primary (grades 1-5) and upper primary (grades 6-8). The shift in universalization of education from enrolment to retention and achievement demands the comparable achievement of learners both in FEP and NFEP. Accordingly, minimum competencies have been worked out at the lower primary level, which are to be achieved by learners in both programmes; of course, efforts are being made to make the process of education also comparable in both the programmes. At the upper primary level it is considered that the NFEP may have a tilt towards the Need and Problem Based model. But the academic competencies at this level also cannot be completely ignored. Therefore, a Need and Problem Based Environment-oriented Competency Model has been developed.

A programme of Adult and Continuing Education will be implemented through various ways and channels, including:

a) Establishment of centres in rural areas for continuing education;

b) Workers education through the employers, trade units and concerned agencies of government;

c) Post-secondary education institutions;

d) Wider promotion of books, libraries and reading rooms;

e) Use of radio, TV and films, as mass and group learning media;

f) Creation of learners' groups and organisations;

g) Programmes of distance/learning;

h) Organising assistance in self-learning: and

i) Organising need-and-interest-based vocational training programme

The programme of action on the National Policy on Education 1986 is as follows:

1. The principal aim of the new National Programme of Adult Education (NPAE) is to provide education including literacy, to the population in 15-35 age group which numbers about 100 million.
2. NPAE would be a phased time-bound programme covering approximately 40 million by 1990 and another 60 million by 1995.
3. Application of science and technology, and pedagogical research for improving the pace and environment of learning.
4. A multi-dimensional programme of continuing education as the instrument for moving towards a learning society.
5. The entire educational system will commit itself to this cause.
6. A direct and continuing linkage between initial literacy instruction and post-literacy and continuing education.
7. Literacy work would be taken up by a large number of students as "study service" viz., specific projects taken up as a part of work experience and social/national service, which would be reflected in the students' final result sheets.

8. Substantial institutional incentives will be provided to Universities, Colleges for eradication of illiteracy in a well-defined area.

9. Continuing education is an indispensable aspect of the strategy of human resource development and of the goal of creation of a learning society.

10. The technical and pedagogic resource support for NPAE will need to be greatly strengthened. The emphasis would be decentralisation and employment of educational technology for quality improvement.

11. Eradication of illiteracy will be launched as a Technical and Societal Mission.

12. All existing Adult Education Projects will be reviewed and reorganised. The basic features would be similar, permitting within a range, flexibility and variation to increase effectiveness and to promote innovation.

13. Evaluation: Maximum attention will be paid to the subject of learner evaluation.

The Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi has raised the education allocation to Rs. 800 crores in 1987-88, as compared to Rs. 352 crores in 1986-87. He has called the increase a "measure of the Government's resolve to bring about an educational transformation in our country." The allocation would go a long way towards implementing the NPE approved by the Parliament last year. The sectoral allocation includes Rs. 625.06 crores on general education, Rs. 173 crores on technical education, Rs. 1.29 crores on sports and youth affairs and Rs. 0.65 crores for secretariat-social services. There is an additional provision of Rs. 25 crores for a special central assistance for border areas in education. Operation Blackboard gets Rs. 100 crores, Navodaya Vidyalayas Rs. 44 crores, Vocationalisation of Education Rs. 50 crores, District Institutes for Educational Training Rs. 42 crores, and Adult Education Rs. 76 crores.

READER'S SCHEMA AND THE MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY: POTENTIAL COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS IN THE BUSINESS STUDIES CLASSROOM

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Martin C. Benson,
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Introduction

The use of case studies as a tool in the teaching of management at both the graduate and undergraduate levels has enjoyed a long and justified popularity. Case study learning has enjoyed such popularity in the English-speaking world that it now is being practiced worldwide. While the authors accept that the case learning method makes available to the students a simulation of various elements of the real world business environment and provides the students with an opportunity to vicariously experience the role of management problem-solver, we also recognize that for students for whom English is a foreign language, the value of the case as a simulation of the real world is greatly diminished by problems of reading comprehension. The authors further maintain that these problems of reading comprehension go beyond the area of decoding, and enter into other realms of reader schema, most especially those of reader experience with the business environment in question, and the reader's previous cross-cultural experience and cultural background.

The Problem

The Harvard School of Business has set the precedent for the use of case studies in the area of business education as an integral part of a general approach to management education has gained widespread popularity. This popularity has spread to many countries outside the Anglophone world, as more and more often international educators have received training in English-speaking countries. Also, English language texts and materials, which deal with western business contexts are being widely utilized, due to the unavailability of materials which deal with other national and cultural contexts. This creates a special problem for business teachers in the non-English-speaking world: How can we assure maximum value is derived from our use of case studies in view of the linguistic and experiential barriers to comprehension which they present to the reader?

Reading Comprehension

Frank Smith in his *Comprehension and Learning*, (1975) uses research in perceptual psychology and cognitive processing to arrive at the conclusion that in reading, just as in listening, the linguistic dimension of communication actually carries little of the meaning. Smith maintains that in reading, the written words on the page actually serve to facilitate a good reader's inferencing about the author's meaning, and serve to inform the reader more about what the writer is not saying than what he actually is saying. In other words, Smith means that in order for reading to be actually possible considering the perceptual and cognitive processing limitations of the human organism, the reader must bring to the text a great deal of previous experience with which to support the derivation of meaning from what is being read. This previous experience falls into two broad categories which we will term textual and content schema. By textual schema we mean the reader's previous experience with the language and text format, or text grammar. This category includes everything from the reader's functional vocabulary and word recognition skills to his/her familiarity with an author's style and the functional organization of the work being read. By content schema we mean the reader's previous life experience with the subject of the reading in question. If the reader has had previous experience with the writer's subject, he/she is of course more likely to be able to grasp what the writer is actually saying in his writing. If, on the other hand the reader is unfamiliar with the author's subject, the chances

that his/her attention will be bound to decoding at the linguistic level will be quite great, with the attendent comprehension problems caused by decreased reading speed and failure to perceive the author's meaning and purpose at the gross level.

In view of these assumptions, we have identified four components which are involved in reading comprehension. These four components are the physio-psycholinguistic, linguistic, reading/study skills or text analysis, and the prior knowledge or content schema. Each component in combination with the others contributes to the comprehension ability of the reader. For example, a student who is devoting much attention to decoding the meaning of a written text will have a great deal of difficulty applying his own experience to what the author is saying on the subject. So much of the reader's energy is devoted to decoding in this situation that it is difficult for the reader to ever get beyond the author's meaning to what the author is actually saying. Even in a situation in which a reader is quite mature in the area of textual schema, reading comprehension and evaluation of a problem presented by a text are drastically inhibited if the content and setting of the material are alien to the reader. In both of the situations above, the reader's lack of personal experience prevents him/her from being able to move from what is recorded on the page into the world which exists outside the text.

The Case Study and Reading Comprehension

It is precisely this world outside the written text which is so effectively evoked by a well-written case study. The value of the case study as a tool of business pedagogy is that it serves as a simulation of the business environment in the real world, and serves as a stimulus for much the same decision making processes required by functioning in that environment. Herein lies the "Catch-22" in the use of case studies in an EFL environment: the very aspects of case studies and the case study approach to business education which make them so valuable also present the greatest barriers to reading comprehension in those for whom English is a foreign language. These barriers are those of linguistics, especially when a case makes use of reported dialogue for added realism, and the whole realm of the foreign business environment and cultural setting which are present in the setting of the case narrative.

A Reading Comprehension Analysis of a Case Study

The case study chosen for analysis in this paper is found in Schlesinger, Eccles, and Gabarro (1983), which is a companion text to Koontz, O'Donnel, and Weinhrich (1984), which is currently in use in the Graduate Business Communication and Management program at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. In this section of the paper we will analyse three sections of the case study which are especially challenging to Thai students, in two of the areas of the components of reading comprehension outlined earlier in this paper. While each section was chosen as an illustration of potential comprehension difficulties in a specific area, it is acknowledged that considerable overlap berween these areas occurs.

1) Linguistic

The following passage from the case illustrates simultaneously the great realism which reporting verbal exchanges can bring to a case study, and the complexity of the reading comprehension task which this brings to the English-as-a-foreign-language reader at the linguistic level.

Briefly, this case, entitled "Sturdivant Electric" by L.A. Schlesinger and others (1983), is concerned with a personality conflict between a computer engineer, Al Abrams, and his immediate superior, Bill Eden, as moderated by the section head, Harris Johnson. The reader is asked to analyse the conflict from the point of view of the section head, and to eventually come to a decision as to how to solve the immediate problem, which is the resignation of the computer engineer at a very sensitive stage in the execution of a contract.

The following passage is an example of one of several in which actual verbal exchanges between the three principals in the case are recorded.

> Abrams: I don't know what this guy [pointing at Eden] expects of me. I've never taken the kind of treatment he's giving off of anyone - even during the recession when jobs were tough to find. He hounds me all day long. I just can't be driven and I can't be paced by that machine.
>
> Eden: Al, you know I do no such thing. I try to be as considerate of you as I possibly can. We've got a job to be done, and you've got to work on the machine when it's free.
>
> Abrams: I don't work that way! When I get on a train of thought at my desk, I've got to follow it through. When you interrupt me I lose the train and it means that I have to repeat the entire mental process that lead up to it. I just can't stop in the middle of a sequence and run back to that damn computer just because it's free for a couple of minutes. I've been on a milk and crackers diet for the last two weeks because my ulcers are acting up again, and it's all because of this work. You're driving me crazy.
>
> Eden: That's not so. Al, you know damn well that I try not to aggravate you. You're so doggone touchy, it's pitiful.
>
> Johnson: Hold on now! It's not going to do either of you any good to get hot under the collar. Let's try to get at the root of the trouble without all the fuss.

The author's purpose in including this exchange in the paper is to illustrate the degree of tension and animosity which exists between Abrams and Eden, as well as to

illustrate certain components of their personalities. These points are conveyed largely through the word choice which the speakers employ, and the author's use of punctuation in order to capture the phrasing and energy of the exchanges. For readers for whom English is their native language, this passage functions very effectively. It reads like drama, and easily comes alive to those for whom the language is familiar. For someone who is not familiar with such words and phrases as, "He hounds me all day long.", "train of thought", "doggone touchy", and "hot under the collar" etc., this passage becomes an exercise in frustration, as the idioms and expressions defie efforts at definition from a standard dictionary. Not only does a passage not easily yield its meaning and purpose to the reader, it may also, if the reader has been confronted with a number of passages which they know they have not comprehended, create anxiety which develops from the student's fear that he/she has been "missing" the meaning. This anxiety may serve to fixate them more firmly on the decoding aspect of reading and distract them from the author's deeper meaning.

2) Reading/Study Skills

Authors Murdick, Moor, Eckhouse, and Zimmerer (1983) offer a systematic and step-by-step procedure for the analysis of case studies. They suggest:

1. Read the case rapidly once to determine the general nature of the company and its setting.
2. Examine the case more carefully and jot down apparent objectives of the company, policies, strategies, symptoms of problems, problems, and issues.
3. Try to group related problems and issues into coherent, broad or even company wide problems.
4. Create a framework for analysis which suits the particular case being studied. Some examples are:
   a. Organize the case around basic economic objectives, policies, strategies, plans, and implementation
   b. Organize the case around the process of administration such as:
      analysis of the situation
      basic objectives
      plans for action, schedules, and budgets
      implementation of plans
      control of operations
   c. Organize the case according to functional areas of the business and show functional interrelationships
   d. Organize the case around business systems: information flow and material flow systems
   e. Organize the case around key individuals in the case.

skill and knowledge at first identifying key points in a piece of reading, and second, at manipulation and reorganization of data supplied by the text. Certainly good readers skim the material to be read, and are confident and competent enough to be able to identify and concentrate on sections of text which are more critical than others.

Consider the following excerpt from the case study:

> Abrams had spent 2 months at the computer contractor's school for technical programming. During this period he learned the logic of the computer he was to work with, that is, the characteristics of the various sections of the machine, their functional relationship to one another, the forms in which data were placed in and taken from the machine, the speeds with which computations could be handled, and many other factors that provided him with the basic tools needed to develop the operating system. From there on, development work was left to the ingenuity of the programmer. This task required a high degree of proficiency in mathematics and the type of mind that could, in an orderly systematic fashion, juggle a vast number of factors, trying first one arrangement and then another, until the desired result was obtained.....In absolute magnitude, the job had hundreds of seperate and distinct operations. Abrams was the only member of the Sturdivant computer staff who had been through the entire training program at the computer manufacturer's training school, although Eden and Smith had been exposed to portions of it.

This paragraph is an example of an area where the reader's reading/study skills are critical, because it is absolutely essential to a complete and accurate judgement of the issues in the case. Buried within a long and dry paragraph which explains the technical aspects of computer operating system programming is the bare bones fact that the programmer, Al Abrams, is indispensable to the company at this particular moment in the progress of the contract in question. The company has no one else with the training or experience to take his place. If the student fails to recognize the importance of this passage to the case study, and if the student misses its ideas, his judgement of the case will almost certainly be incomplete.

3) Content Schema

We have identified two main areas of content schema, or prior reader knowledge and experience, which are especially challenged by the case study. The first of these involves the reader's previous knowledge and experience with business, especially factors which are specific to the type of business or industry being dealt with by the case study assigned. Immagine working on a case in which you had little idea of the nature of the product, market, and process, one's comprehension of the main points, as supported by the information the author assumes the reader to posess, would be an exercise in futility. The second of these areas is much more discrete than the first i.e. the area of cultural content. This is an area that almost certainly is not important to the author. He or she is writing from her own cultural frame, and is surely unaware of the cultural component to what he/she is doing. Similarly, professors with extended

the case. Look at the following selection for examples of these two areas of content schema which may pose comprehension barriers to the students.

> Personnel of the Sturdivant Electric Corporation were entering the stage of running final acceptance tests on a special-purpose computer they had subcontracted to supply to the Armed Services. One stipulation in the computer contract was a demonstration by the supplier that the machine would function correctly and reliably under test conditions. The special operating system of the computer was prepared by Sturdivant Electric's chief programmer, Al Abrams. Several days before beginning these tests, Abrams submitted his work to his immediate superior, Bill Eden, who was computer project engineer. Eden was to review the design of the operating system and compare it to specifications. It was not intended that Eden check the correctness of the operating system itself, since forthcoming operational tests would accomplish that check.
>
> In the course of his check, Eden found that Abrams had taken some liberties in one of the terms in the specification, and had told Abrams to reverse the changes. Abrams had become enraged. He shouted that Eden was not capable of passing judgement on his work. Abrams had stormed out of the computer room, bellowing and cursing, and had bumped into Harris Johnson, the Sturdivant test facility supervisor, in the hallway. Johnson tried to calm Abrams down, but Abrams pushed past him, claiming he would leave his security pass at the gate as a sign of his permanent departure.
>
> Johnson knew that Eden and Abrams had had difficulties before, and that the project, nearing completion, was in a particularly sensitive stage of development. Realizing that he did not have direct line authority over Abrams within Sturdivant, Johnson needed to decide quickly what his next step should be.

This passage serves as the introduction to the case study. It briefly introduces the principal characters and the business to the reader. It contains several examples of areas of business-specific and cultural content which may be alien or deficient in the Thai reader's schema.

First, in terms of business-specific schema, are the elements of customer, product, and process. The customer identified here is the "Armed Services". The author assumes that the reader realises that this means the United States military, in this case probably the Air Force. Attendant to dealing with this particular customer are all the strict process controls, deadlines, and penalties which typify dealing with a government agency, especially one whose ultimate concern is the national defence. The Armed Forces of the United States is very serious about its deadlines and specifications. The violation of a deadline means costly monetary penalties and loss of company reputation. The violation of a specification means costly penalties, reworking, and perhaps loss of the contract. All of these factors bring a special urgency to the facts of the case. That urgency is critical to understanding the behavior of the people in the business setting, and therefore to arriving at an informed solution to the case.

obsession of everyone with deadlines, and the supervisor's inability to step in and make a quick and lasting decision to solve the problem. It is easy for an American to understand and tolerate the behavior of the "tempermental genius" type personality characterized by Al Abrams. However, a Thai student, if confronted with a "bellowing and cursing" individual such as this, may have problems ignoring this type of personality characterized by Al Abrams. He/she may have problems ignoring this person's lack of emotional control in view of his professional qualifications. Similarly, a Thai student may have difficulty empathising with the various characters as their deadline rolls around. The Western view of time as linear and finite definitely colors Western business practice and individual behavior in a way which is difficult for someone of a different cultural background to appreciate. Yet another area of cultural schema concerns the power relationships in western corporations. Though Harris Johnson is definitely superior to both Abrams and Eden, because he is in a different division from them, he is essentially powerless to make any decision which will bind them. Instead he can only make suggestions and communicate information to their actual supervisor, who is nearly a thousand miles away.

Some Suggestions for Using Case Studies

First, we feel that it is important for the professor to do everything in his/her power to bring to life the world of the case study. This could mean an introductory lecture on American or western culture and business, or more specific lectures and background readings on topics relevant to the business setting presented in the case.

Second, it may be necessary to rewrite the cases so as to facilitate the student's comprehension of the relevant material. A professor should at least help to orient the students to the structure and logic of the individual cases, if not explicitly directing the student's attention to the most important sections.

Ideally, many of the problems discussed so far could be avoided, if efforts were mounted to compile and publish a set of cases generated in Thailand and in Thai businesses or international corporations in which Thais are employed. From this would come the relevance which is lacking in so many of the educational materials which have been generated in foreign intellectual and cultural environments, and which are widely used in the Thai educational context.

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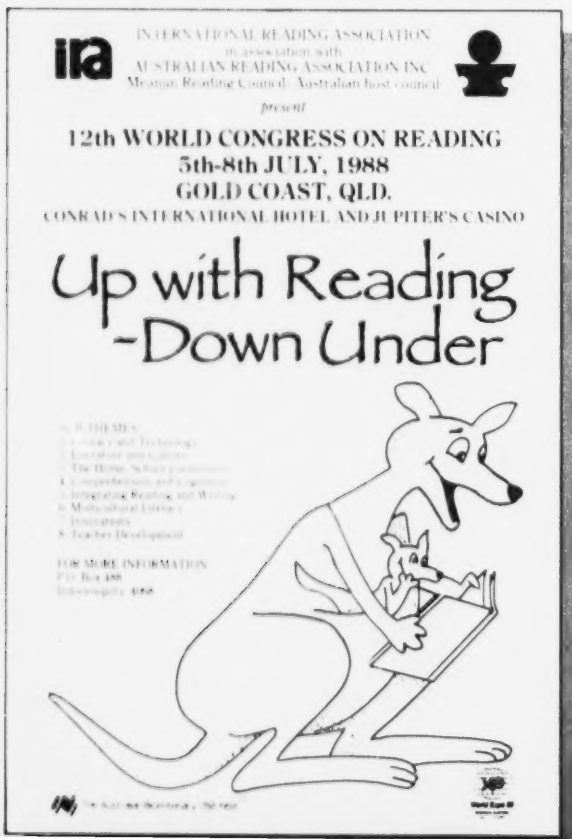
SEMINAR ON LITERACY & READING IN ASIA

PROGRAMME 25 April 1987

EVENTS	SPEAKERS
Registration	
Welcome address by the Chairman, IDAC	Mr. William Cheng (Hong Kong)
PAPER PRESENTATION	
1 Literacy in India and Research in Reading (article contribution, presentation replaced by Reading Comprehension in Hong Kong: some Recent Developments)	Professor K.G. Rastogi (India) Mr. William Cheng
2 Discourse Signalling in Reading	Dr. Victoria Key (Philippines)
TEA BREAK	
3 The English Language Programme for Lower Primary School Children in Singapore	Dr. Ng Seok Moi (Singapore)
LUNCH BREAK	
4 Literacy Profile of Pakistan	Mrs. Neelam Hussain (Pakistan)
5 Standardised Reading Test of English for Junior Secondary Schools in Hong Kong	Dr. Cheung Yat shing (Hong Kong)
TEA BREAK	
6 Readers' Schema and the Manage ment Case Study: Potential Compre hension Problems in Business Studies Classroom	Dr. Manit Boonprasert (Thailand)
PANEL & FLOOR DISCUSSION Theme: The Mother Tongue and Langua ge of Wider Communication the Bilingual Partnership	All Speakers & the floor
Summary & Response	Mr. Yu Fong-ying (Hong Kong)
The Way Ahead	Mr. William Cheng



INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION YOUNG PROFESSIONALS INSTITUTE ON LITERACY: GLOBAL ISSUES, PROMISING SOLUTIONS (FORMERLY ENTITLED YOUTH CONGRESS)

Dates: July 5-8, at the Conrad International Hotel, the Gold Coast, Australia. Delegates will attend a full-day meeting on July 5; daily institute sessions on July 6, 7, and 8; and participate in related sessions of the World Congress on Reading.

□

Participants: Limited to approximately 45 young professionals (preservice, young graduate students, and/or entry level professionals from education and the field of literacy). It is planned to enroll 10-15 young professionals from each of the following: North America; Australia; other countries around the world. Special attempts will be made to have delegates from all regions of the world, especially developing countries.

□

Purpose: The intent of the Young Professionals Institute is to provide an international forum for young people to interact with world leaders in considering global and national issues related to literacy. Specifically, the Institute is designed to:

- promote international understanding and contribute to the development of world peace.
- promote increased awareness of the crucial role literacy plays for economic, social, and political progress, as well as individual self-fulfillment.
- provide increased knowledge of the nature of the literacy problems in various parts of the world and awareness of the responsibility each individual has in helping to alleviate these problems.
- provide knowledge of a range of successful literacy projects being carried out in various regions of the world.
- serve as motivation for individuals to become involved in on-going literacy projects in their own countries and/or stimulate the conceptualization of projects they could initiate.

□

Language: All participants must have a working knowledge of English. No translations or simultaneous interpretation is planned.

□

Registration Fees: US$80.00

□

Deadlines: Indication of intent to fund a delegate: December 10, 1987

Registration of selected delegate:

NRF 1987 – A CAMPAIGN TO REMEMBER !

Ng Seok Moi,
Society for Reading and Literacy,
Singapore.

The National Reading Fortnight, an annual reading campaign for Singapore organised by the National Book Development Council was launched again in March this year. From feedback after the two-week campaign, the organising committee felt that this had been one of the most successful campaigns ever run. Although helped by some government ministries (Community Development and Education), support for the campaign came mainly from the affiliate bodies of the National Book Development Council. For the second year running, the focus of the National Reading Fortnight was on young readers and their parents and teachers. The focus was indeed appropriate as early childhood is a very important period for education. "Tell Me A Story" was chosen as the slogan of the campaign, a reminder to the slick world of computer technology and multi-media packages that stories can be very effective in the education of the child and that story-telling has the power to excite the imagination of the young mind.

Momentum gathered as the days to the National Reading Fortnight drew close and the activities grew not only in number but also to an unprecedented variety. Obviously one main group of activities was devoted to the theme of story-telling. Miss Keiko Matsuoka from Japan was flown to Singapore for the ocassion. She not only shared with participants her expertise on the art of story-telling but also entranced audiences of varying ages with stories. Legends and folk tales from different parts of Asia were related by local volunteers in different library centres. Other volunteers, travelling in mobile library vans brought the magic of stories to young children in the remoter parts of Singapore. And there were story-telling competitions for the children.

Another group of activities centred on reading and writing stories. There were reading workshops armed at showing adults interesting and effective ways of helping children with reading. There were writing workshops for children and competitions for the best child story-reader and designer of book-jackets. Another interesting activity was "My Favourite Toy" where owners proudly displayed toys associated with different stories. The impact of these activities helped to raise public awareness of the importance of reading while providing a tremendous amount of enjoyment for the young children.

This year a greater attempt was made to reach out to the public not only in English but also in Malay, Chinese and Tamil – languages spoken by the majority of Singapore people. The activities therefore were aimed at not only raising the level of literacy in English – the language for economic survival in Singapore but also to help parents encourage literacy in the mother tongue, to reach out to their own cultural heritage.

The report on the National Reading Fortnight showed that more children and adults participated in the events than had in previous years. Requests for additional activities continuing throughout the year came to the organising committee and the various affiliate bodies, especially the Society for Reading and Literacy. The Fortnight left the organisers, workshop leaders and participants exhausted but satisfied. A post-mortem of the campaign uncovered reasons for its success.

One contributing factor lay in the organization, the way the various affiliate bodies worked together to co-ordinate the various activities. These affiliate bodies of the National Book Development Council are voluntary organizations concerned with the care and education of young children or with reading and literacy of the public in general. A spirit of good-will and co-operation prevailed amongst members of the organising committee helped by an efficient full-time organising secretary. Planning well ahead of time was another important factor. Repeating the theme for a second year helped tremendously as past pitfalls were avoided and old successes were repeated with new items put on trial.

The attempt at decentralisation also helped. While in previous campaigns activities were carried out mainly in the libraries, new locations like community centres situated in housing estates were used this year. As more centres than previously were used, the co-ordination between different institutions and people became more complex, but the ends justified the means. Work on publicity was well rewarded as good publicity is necessary for the success of any campaign.

While the organisers look forward to more successes in the coming years, the National Reading Fortnight 1987 will stand out in the annals of Singapore reading campaigns.

A MEMORABLE CONFERENCE IN THE LAND OF SMILES

William Cheng,
International Development in Asia.

The Second International Conference on Literacy and Languages was held in Bangkok from 20-22 August. The theme was Literacy and Technological Development and it was natural that the conference attracted scholars and specialists in the field of literacy, languages and technology from many countries. The two co-sponsors were the Thailand Reading Association and Literacy and Languages in Asia (LLA). I was impressed by the support the two associations had managed to obtain. The contributing and cooperating organisations included: the Ministry of University Affairs, International Reading Association, UNESCO, Thai Airways International Ltd., the Bangkok Bank Ltd., the Shell Company of Thailand Ltd., Non-Formal Education Department, Ministry of Education. As a member of the arrangements committees of a number of congresses, I was also interested to note that there were over 70 conference officials distributed among 12 work committees.

Because of the advance publicity and effective public relations, the number of overseas participants totalled over 60, 23 from the U.S.A. and the rest from India, Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan, England, Canada and Australia. Local participants numbered well over 200. They came from universities and tertiacy institutions, teachers colleges, secondary schools, the Ministry of Education, Office of the National Education Centre, Literacy Association of Thailand, UNESCO and other groups.

One of my reasons for attending the conference was to make use of the opportunity to meet members of the International Development in Asia Committee attending the conference so that a follow-up meeting of the committee, after the first one in Hong Kong in April, could be held with Dr. Phylliss Adams, President of IRA being present to advise and guide the committee. Through the help of Dr. Manit Boonprasert, a meeting of the Committee was held at lunch-time on 21 August. In addition to Dr. Phylliss Adams, two members of the International Development in Asia Committee who had not been able to come to the Hong Kong meeting in April, were also present. They were Dr. K.G. Rastogi of India and Dr. Takahika Sakamoto of Japan. A report on the Hong Kong meeting and the progress of the major project - the publication of the Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin was given. Dr. Adams expressed her appreciation of the work of the Committee and assured us of IRA support if proposals could be submitted in time for the Board of Directors to consider them. Dr. Rastogi mentioned that he had details about research projects being conducted in India and would welcome proposals for joint projects with other regions as well as the sharing of information with researchers in other countries. Members of the committee exchanged fruitful ideas and it was hoped that there would be closer and more positive cooperation as a result of our meeting.

Dr. Jonathan Anderson of Australia attended our luncheon meeting as a special guest. The committee was very much encouraged to hear that Australia feels very much a part of the Asian region. Dr. Anderson pointed out that after repeated requests that Australia be included in the Asian division of UNESCO, this request had been granted and Australia had been shifted from the Europeans section of UNESCO to the Asian section.

With regard to the Youth Congress to be held in Brisbane in 1988, members of the committee expressed their willingness to cooperate in nominating and sending participants to the Congress. All in all, the meeting was productive and cordial.

A comment or two about the different sessions of the conference. The conference consisted of plenary and parallel sessions, with a different focus for each day. These were (1) the Relationship between Literacy and Technology, (2) Ways to Promote Literacy as a Means of Pursuing Technological Advancement, (3) Methods and Techniques of Teaching Reading Skills as a Means of Coping with Technological Advancement. There were also country reports, the countries covered being Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and India. The reports were of special interest to me as the information supplied might well be of interest and use to the editors of the Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin. The mind boggled at the magnitude of the task facing some countries and yet one could not fail to admire the determination and courage of those who took up the task of improving the literacy rate in the face of a fast population growth.

It is inevitable that people attending a conference assess its success on the quality of the keynote addresses and the other papers presented. Because of the number of parallel sessions going on at any one time, 7-8 being the norm, it is not possible to assess the relative merits of individual presentations. The talks given at the plenary sessions were generally of a high standard, stimulating and thought-provoking and occasionally provocative. Based on the abstracts provided and the sessions I managed to attend as well as occasional remarks I overhead, I would say the overall quality of the other papers was also reasonably high. A few comments on the thread running through the conference will enable the reader to appreciate the objectives of the conference organizers.

As I mentioned earlier, the three separate strands for the three days underpinned the main theme 'Literacy and Technological Development'. The purpose was to bring out the impact of the new technology on society and the challenges it posed to education and literacy. At the same time literacy was seen as a means of pursuing technological advancement. The address by Jonathan Anderson on the first day: 'The Relationship Between Literacy and Technology: Today's Information Society and Literacy' was a clarion call to educators to face the challenges of the information age. He traced the major literacy milestones in the history of human communication and pointed out that the 'information age now demands multiliteracy'. He went on to say that today's information age was characterised by three key features: (a) vastly increased amounts of information, (b) information is packaged differently and (c) society relies heavily on computer-based technologies. These in turn had at least four implications for reading/language teachers: (a) need for technological literacy, (b) knowledge requirements are changing, (c) extended notions of literacy and (d) new modes of instructional delivery. His address concluded with this challenge: 'The developing countries of today are these that missed out on the industrial revolution. The developing countries of tomorrow will be those that miss out on the information revolution. The challenges are with us'. Taking into account the theme of the conference it was not surprising that a quarter of the papers had to do with the new technology and its impact on society and education. A few examples can be given: 'A Computerized System to Improve Functional Literacy for Primary-Grade Children in Thailand', 'Evaluation of Microcomputer Software Use for Developing Writing Skills in Undergraduates', 'Computer-Assisted Writing for Learning Disable Students Using Reading and Writing Connection', 'Electronic Publishing and Books: Present and Future' and 'Computer-Assisted Instruction'. At the same time there was obviously an attempt to balance this with papers on literacy

as a means of pursuing technological advancement and a number of papers on the teaching of reading viz. 'How to Teach Reading Communicatively', 'Deep Structures and Teaching Reading Skills', Reading in ESL and Communicative Language Teaching'. There were also a number of talks with a more universal appeal. One of those was the talk 'Essential Links to Literacy: Language, Literature and Love' by Dr. Phylliss J. Adams, IRA President. The message she put across was timely and warm, one that went to the hearts of all participants. All in all, there was sufficient variety to cater for participants with different interests. As with similar conferences, there was always the regret that one was not able to attend all the sessions one would like to.

As a teacher educator, I must mention one more presentation which was particularly inpressive and relevant to those engaged in teaching ESL: 'Multi-media Programmes for Literacy Education' by John Chapman. He first gave a general account of distance teaching as undertaken by the Open University and then went on to illustrate how literacy courses were constructed using the technical facilities available to the University. His talk illustrated clearly how technology could help the cause of education and teacher training on a scale that staggered the imagination. Of special interest was his description of the construction principles of the course on Language Development. The course had six blocks of materials spread over one year. The blocks were on the following topics: understanding speech, patterns of language, words and their meanings, communication skills, observing classroom language, curriculum development. A research was being undertaken to translate these into courses for the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English.

Apart from the excitement of attending the conference itself, I found the four days most rewarding as my stay in Bangkok enabled me to meet old friends and make new acquaintances. I most acknowledge the warm reception given by Dr. Siriporn Limtrakarn, Dr. Uthai Piromruen, Dr. Manit Boonprasert and Dr. Tuanchai Tamngarmtrong, to name only a few. A special word of thanks goes to Dr. Manit Boonprasert, who arranged a meeting of the International Development in Asia Committee at very short notice and extended such warm hospitality to me. They all exemplified the best characteristics of their people. For me, the meeting was 'A Memorable Conference in the Land of Smiles'.

ILLITERACY IN THE U.S.A.

Amy Shargel,
University of Pennsylvania.

Current Developments

It is estimated that there are between fifty and seventy million Americans who are functionally illiterate; the problem is particularly serious among minority populations. For Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians in America, poor literacy skills is a major factor that contributes to their social deprivation.

The consensus among literacy specialists is that most adult literacy programs have failed to improve the literacy skills of their clients. In their effort to improve these programs, many specialists have made individual needs and values of adult learners a focus of their attention. Furthermore, these specialists have broadened their definition of literacy to emcompass a complex set of abilities which operate within a variety of social and cultural settings as a result of their realization of the significance of ethnicity and culture on the learner's language attitudes and acquisition.

It is also realized that adult illiteracy is a product of an interaction among numerous social factors such as under-education, unemployment, poor housing, racial and sexual discrimination etc. so that literacy programs alone will not solve the problem.

In the area of research, there is a growing awareness among specialists that there is a need to draw in the perspectives and talents of minority individuals and add them to the pool of knowledge of literacy issues.

In the areas of curriculum development, instructional methods and assessment tools, employing same models for both child and adult literacy programs is now regarded as an error because it leads to an emphasis on literacy deficits rather than strengths in adult programs. Instead, specialists believe that literacy abilities and strengths should be emphasized in adult programs and that, instead of using school materials, curriculum materials used in adult programs should be specially designed to meet the learner's needs and interests.

Other innovations include the development of computer-aided instruction and related software for adult learners, as well as training adult learners to use metacognitive skills, i.e. the development of awareness and the use of strategies for thinking about one's own thinking process with reading.

Also, literacy workers have come to realize that a significant problem in advancing literacy is the inadequate exchange of information and ideas about literacy-related issues between literacy researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. Much effort is now being expended to reduce the information gap among these parties.

THE LITERACY RESEARCH CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Amy Shargel,
University of Pennsylvania.

The LRC has been involved in research projects and other activities which touch on many of the issues discussed above. In January 1985, LRC launched the Adult Literacy Evaluation Project (ALEP), in cooperation with the Center for Literacy (CFL) in Philadelphia. ALEP is assessing the impact of literacy instruction on the lives of adults enrolled in CFL's program. This study adopts a holistic and socio-cultural view of literacy, and thus aims to evaluate learner's needs in the broad context of their use and practice in adult life.

In 1985, LRC held an international conference on literacy entitled "The Future of Literacy in a Changing World: Syntheses from Industrialized and Developing Nations." A volume of papers presented at the conference will be published by Pergamon Press in 1987. In May 1987, the LRC and CFL co-sponsored a conference on adult literacy held at the University of Pennsylvania. Another symposium on the general topic of "Toward Defining Literacy", co-sponsored by LRC and the National Advisory Council on Adult Education, was held in September 1987.

Activities such as the above have helped to increase public awareness of literacy problems and the public concern for under-educated adults have been expressed in a number of positive ways. For example, the U.S. Department of Education's Adult Literacy Initiative has brought adult literacy to the attention of the nation. Concern within the business community about adult literacy problems prompted the creation of the Business Council for Effective Literacy in 1984. Among the Council's activities is the publication of the *Business Council for Effective Literacy Newsletter*, which provides business with information on the overall problem of literacy, offers suggestions as to how the business community can help literacy efforts, and provides examples of corporate literacy-related activities.

In 1986, Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) was launched, a landmark television public service project combining local community efforts with a national media focus on adult illiteracy. Now in its second year of operation, PLUS brought information about adult illiteracy to nearly eighty-six million American homes through radio and television programming and public service announcements during the 1986-87 broadcast season.

At the local level, last October also saw the enactment of the first Adult Literacy Act in Pennsylvania, making two million dollars available for basic skills programs statewide.

Literacy developments in the United States are at a critical juncture. On both local and national levels, adult literary problems have been brought home to most Americans. Important questions are being asked, and basic problems re-examined and redefined. Specialists are challenging the traditional approaches to literacy acquisition, and are paying more attention to adult learners, to their perceived needs, values and goals. With this new learner-oriented approach to literacy development, the future of adult literacy programs in the U.S. seems hopeful.

LITERACY & UNESCO NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Alan N. Crawford,
International Reading Association.

It has been estimated that there are nearly 900 million adult illiterates in the world today, most of them residing in the developing countries. Functional illiteracy, the inability to cope with the demands of a complex modern society, is also a major problem in the industrialized countries. In recoognition of this world-wide problem, it is expected that the United Nations will soon proclaim an International Literacy Year (ILY) for 1990.

UNESCO will have the key role in formulating ILY strategies. Agreement has been reached on serveral objectives related to ILY, including increasing public awareness of the scope, nature, and implications of illiteracy and its relationship to poverty, especially among adult women; increasing the commitments of governments to actions to eradicate illiteracy; increasing popular participation within and among countries to combat illiteracy through the activities of institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGO's); increasing cooperation and assistance among member states with respect to the flow of technical, material, and financial support from industrialized to developing countries; and increasing cooperation within the U.N. systems and among inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.

An important aspect of UNESCO's literacy efforts around the world is conducted through a group of NGO's which are organized into a Collective Consultation of NGO's on Literacy, of which the International Reading Association is a member. Representatives of member organizations of the Collective Consultation meet annually to plan and implement joint projects in support of literacy. In addition, working group meetings of the Collective Consultation are held in Paris twice a year. The Fourth Collective Consultation of NGO's on Literacy will be held in Bangkok in 7-12 December 1987.

A major agendum for the Collective Consultation's Bangkok meeting is the upcoming U.N. Proclamation of ILY. Member states of UNESCO will promote a variety of activities designed to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000. NGO's will also implement literacy programs and activities, sometimes in cooperation with member states.

In connection with the meeting of the Fourth Collective Consultation, the Centre for Studies, Research & Training in International Understanding & Cooperation and the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Association are organizing a seminar on the topic of "UNESCO, NGO's & Literacy." The objectives are as follows:

1. To become acquainted with UNESCO's activities in the field of literacy, especially in Asia and the Pacific.
2. To study the role of NGO's in the struggle against illiteracy within and without the programmes of UNESCO and to understand the relationship between the activities of NGO's on national and regional levels and those on the international level.
3. To encourage the participants to initiate operational or informational projects on literacy, if possible, in co-operation with other NGO's.

Participants will include UNESCO Club leaders and teachers in Asia and representatives of national, regional, and international NGO's participating in the consultation. Special participants will include representatives of the Department of Non-Formal Education in Thailand and literacy programme specialists of Regional Office for Education in Asia & the Pacific and UNESCO. □

ASIAN LITERACY & READING BULLETIN NO. 2

December 1988

ASIAN LITERACY & READING BULLETIN

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1990
INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

It has been estimated that more than one quarter of the world's adult population, 889 million people 15 years of age or older, are illiterate. In addition, more than 100 million primary-school age children are not enrolled in school, thereby setting the stage for future increases in illiteracy statistics among adults. According to Unesco figures, 34.9% of the world's illiterate adults are women, and 20.5% are men. The highest rate of adult illiteracy is in Africa, with 54% illiteracy, as compared with 36% in Asia and 17% in Latin America. More than 98% of the world's illiterates are from developing nations – almost 75% of them, 666 million, live in Asia.

The problem of illiteracy also impacts on the industrialized nations, where functional illiteracy affects 5% or more of some populations, with larger percentages in most nations suffering from some problems with reading and writing.

In December 1987, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 1990 as International Literacy Year. The proclamation was the result of the 42nd session of the Unesco General Assembly in 1985, at which time Unesco urged an international year of observation to promote greater understanding of the illiteracy problem and to intensify efforts to eradicate illiteracy. Unesco has been invited to assume the lead role in preparing and observing the year. Member states and non-governmental organizations such as the International Reading Association will have important functions to fulfil in this process.

One goal of International Literacy Year (ILY) is to lead to a plan of action among member states for the purpose of eradicating illiteracy in the world by the year 2000. Among the ILY objectives of the Unesco General Conference are increased member-state government action to eliminate illiteracy, particularly among women, increased public awareness of the problem and of the means for combating it, increased popular participation through the activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations, voluntary associations, and community groups, increased cooperation among member states in the battle against illiteracy, increased cooperation among United National agencies, such as Unesco, Unicef, FAO, and ILO, and the use of ILY to launch a plan of action to reduce the primary school drop-out rate and to establish post-literacy programs to prevent literate people from lapsing again into illiteracy.

A.C.

MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA COMMITTEE

Following the first two meetings of the IDAC. held respectively in April 1987 in Hong Kong and in August 1987 in Bangkok. the third meeting was held at 7:15 p.m. on 7 July 1988 in the Royal Garden Restaurant. Gold Coast. Australia.

Present: Mr William CHENG. Dr CHEUNG Yat-shing. Dr Siriporn LIMTRAKARN. Dr Sumalee SUNQSRI. Miss Kitty Kit-man KWAN.

1. Clarification on the Mailing Charge of the Reading Bulletin

   Mr Cheng reported that a few Asian councils had the misapprehension that they were asked to pay for the mailing cost of the *Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin No. 1* while actually it had already been paid for in Hong Kong. This misunderstanding caused one local council to refuse the admittance of the issues of the Bulletin to its country and have them returned to Hong Kong.

   It was AGREED that starting from the next issue onward. five issues of the Bulletin would be sent to each Asian local council by air and the rest in bulk by surface mail.

2. Continuation of Publishing of the Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin

   Following the first pilot issue of the *Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin* published in December. 1987. the next issue. Bulletin No.2. was again prepared by the Hong Kong Reading Association as the Singaporean Reading Association was in the midst of other commitments. Bulletin No.2 was ready to be sent overseas in July. 1988 by the Hong Kong Reading Association.

   For the third issue. Dr Limtrakarn promised to contribute one of her papers on English reading skill of Thai University students. Mr Cheng expressed thanks for her support and pledged to see to the issuing of Bulletin No.3.

3. Preliminary Discussion on Future Joint Projects

   Dr Sunqsri and Dr Limtrakarn welcomed the idea of co-operating with other Asian local councils to run some joint research projects. They found that the biggest problem Thai students faced was the retention of reading and writing skills. Dr Cheung believed that the problem could be approached by calling support from the local publishers in Thai to produce more reading material and make it easily available to the Thai students. in particular.

4. Proposal on the Venue for the 14th World Congress on Reading

   Mr Cheng pledged his support for the proposal that the 14th World Congress on Reading (1992) be held in Thailand in order to ease travelling expenses and thus help encourage participation from Asian countries where literacy problems were of great concern.

5. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

William CHENG
Chairman, International Development in Asia Committee, 1988-89

Kitty Kit-man KWAN
Secretary

PROPOSALS FOR LOSER CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION IN ACHIEVING OR COMMON GOALS AND CARRYING OUT THE CHARGES OF IDAC

(A) From the Philippines

IDAC Charges	Activities	Action by
1. Develop specific proposals to help IRA serve the region and promote cooperation among the affiliates and councils in the region	1. Budget proposal to IRA for IDAC annual meetings and related activities. (Transportation expenses may be subsidized partly especially for developing countries.)	IDAC members and IRA Chairpersons of Committee on International Development
2. Develop activities to increase international awareness. involvement and participation in the region	2-1. Annual meeting of the members of the International Development in Asia	IDAC members (Members with a term of two years may be the immediate past president of the local council or the present president whichever is applicable in the country concerned).
	2-2. A two-day seminar sponsored by the local council for local council members and interested educators which coincides with the IDAC meeting.	IDAC members. local council members and reading and literacy specialists
	2-3. School visitations with particular attention to the reading and literacy programs to coincide with the IDAC meeting	IDAC members / council presidents. reading and literacy experts
	2-4. Forum on problems. situations and solutions related to reading and literacy in Asia.	IDAC members / council representatives and reading and literacy specialists
	2-5. Continuous communication and exchange of researches. publication and other related activities of the regional council members (Other councils may develop a standardized test suited to the needs and demands of the students in the countries concerned.)	IDAC members / council presidents Local councils
	2-6. Asian Literacy and Reading Bulletin (To be published twice a year and increase the number of publication later).	
3. Work to increase IRA membership in local councils in the region	3.1. Information dissemination on IRA and the local councils 3.2. Campaigns / Projects to increase the membership in both IRA and local council	IDAC members and Council Officers
4. Work cooperatively with other committees on international development	4. Communication and sharing of the Asian Literacy and Reading Bulletin with the other Committees on International Development	Chairpersons of the International Development Committees in other countries / regions

Victoria Rey,
Reading Association of the Philippines

(B) From India

1. Different activities and programmes may be organised in different countries depending upon the capacity of the Reading Association in that country.
2. The IDAC Committee should hold its annual meeting in different countries. Some experts from USA/Canada may be invited to attend the meetings. Members of other committees may also be invited.
3. The members visiting a country may be looked after by the local reading association.
4. A quarterly Newsletter/Bulletin may by published by the Committee.
5. Some cross-country projects may be linked up which may be partly financed by the countries concerned and partly by IRA or Unesco. Action Research projects may be widely and comprehensively circulated.
6. The countries lagging behind should be given more help.

K.G. Rastogi
Indian Reading Association

THE STANDARDISED ENGLISH READING TEST FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN HONG KONG

Background

People have criticised standardised tests because they have either misunderstood the nature and function of standardised tests, or because they have seen these tests misused, or rather the results of these tests misused.

Undeniably the standardised test has been used in some places in the world to stigmatise children, labelling them as inadequate, and to argue that the year's standard has fallen or risen. In the USA, in particular, many people have misgivings about the standardised test. When the SAT (Standardised Achievement Test) results drop, there is a general panic that the standard has fallen.

However, such a negative attitude towards the standardised test should be corrected. The standardised test should in all cases be used to reflect problems and the possible causes of these problems, and be used to help educators formulate their educational policies, thereby to improve the quality of education and increase the number of children who can benefit from the education offered by the society.

As long as we use the standardised test to measure general performance and not any particular individual person, we have a good chance of making good use of the test and not abusing it. We therefore decided to use the test, discreetly.

In the case of this study, the standardised test is used to:

a) find information useful to educators who have to make major educational policies

b) help teachers and parents to understand their children and find suitable reading material to ensure learning efficiency, and

c) promote communication among Asian countries in their understanding of some problems and in developing some pointers towards better second language education.

Developing the test

Planning of the test first took place in 1983.

Three pilot tests were conducted in 1984-85. The final test was conducted in the two weeks from 4th November to 22nd November 1985.

Material used to develop the test was taken from readers, which were written for Hongkong secondary students. In the first pilot test, 744 test items were used. These 744 items were set in 8 sub-tests. For the second pilot test, these items were revised, some were removed, some were amended and some new ones were included. A total of 806 items, still in 8 sub-tests, were used. These 806 items were further refined after the second pilot test. In the third pilot test, 342 test items were selected from them and this pilot test proved successful. The final test used the same 342 items in 4 sub-tests.

2,243 students took part in the first pilot test, 1,186 took part in the second, and 360 took part in the third. 4,750 other students, from 20 schools, took part in the final test.

The test

The 20 schools that took part in the test represented a cross-section of the schools in Hongkong: they were in Hongkong, Kowloon and the New Territories; they included government, aided and private schools; they were in urban, rural and newly developed areas; they included boys', girls' and coeducational schools.

The 4 sub-tests comprised two levels: the junior level and the senior level. Tests Junior A and Junior B were for Secondary 1-3 students. Tests Senior A and Senior B were for Secondary 3-5 students. Each of the junior tests A and B contained 84 test items. Each of the senior tests A and B contained 87 items.

Each test consisted of four types of test items: comprehension multiple choice questions, cloze multiple choice questions, vocabulary recognition and excess word identification. All four types required the students to put down some answer on the answer paper and thereby allowing some guessing. Each test lasted 50 minutes.

Only the tests of the Junior level will be considered in this paper. All reference made to the findings will be made to the findings of the Junior Test A and Junior Test B only.

Use of the findings of the test

The results seem to reveal some factors, supporting or disproving the general impression about second language educational standards in Hongkong. Some people have complained that the secondary school student does not even know the 26 letters of the alphabet; others have complained that the replacement of the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE) by the Secondary School Places Allocation System (SSPAS) in 1978 led to a drop in the standard of English. (The SSEE tested Chinese, English and Arithmetic, while the SSPAS tests only Chinese and Arithmetic); yet others alleged that the new school places allocation system, by residential-area divisions, has led to tremendous problems in mixed-ability teaching.

The findings of the standardised test, also known as the Reading Association Test (RAT) offer some light on these complaints. We hope that the findings can help the policy-makers to look at the problems more clearly.

Problems in the findings

The results of the test were computer-analysed. All went well until we tried to draw a graph line. The initial graph did not make sense. Ability (that is the scores) plotted against age in months did not show any correlation (see Graph A).

The general belief that the older a student is, the more language ability he possesses, and the more independent reading he can handle, was not revealed. The line on Graph A is erratic. There is no legible curve whatsoever.

After some trial and error on the computer, we concluded that the graph was masked by two factors: firstly, since some students with very poor performance were well over the average age for their class (i.e. students well over the age of 12-13 in Secondary 1, 13-14 in Secondary 2, and 14-15 in Secondary 3), the number of such students must be big enough to distort the picture; secondly, since some guessing can enable one to score points in these tests, the guessing element might be strong enough to distort the picture, and it would be necessary to draw a line between guessing scores and non-guessing scores.

Each of the factors, confounding in themselves, multiplied the distortion when interacting on each other; the situation was quite disconcerting. The number of students, who were over-age and performing very poorly and the number of years by which they were over-age, turned out to be greater than generally expected, especially in the New Territories. While one expected the average Secondary 1 student to be starting with the threshold level of secondary education, he evidently does not. In the Standardised Test, an average student could score 20% of the total mark, by sheer guessing, but a careful scrutiny showed that he needed to have at least the threshold ability of the English Language to score 30% of the total mark for his test.

Several attempts were made to reorganise the figures before we found the threshold level. By threshold, we mean the level at which a student can do some independent reading with the material offered and used in junior secondary schools in Hongkong, the bulk of material from which we extracted our test items.

We finally decided to remove these two factors by picking out all the students, who were overage by more than eighteen months and students who scored less than 30% of the total mark. Instantly, the graph became lucid (See Graph B). The correlation of ability and age became clear and readable. The older a student, the better his reading ability. Then we compiled the figures again, including the scores above 20%. The reading became meaningful. The mean of a Form 3 class could be 83.2%, and the mean of a Form 1 class could be 20.4%. The mean of Secondary 3 was higher than the mean of Secondary 2 and the mean of Secondary 2, higher than that of Secondary 1, (with the exception of an odd case in one Form 2 class where the mean was 20%).

Interpretation

When we removed the scores below 30% of the full mark from the graph, that is, when we removed the scores below threshold level from the graph, the graph became meaningful; but we were quite astounded by the number of scores we had to remove.

Of the Form 1 population who took part in the test 49% were below threshold level; 36% of the Form 2 population were below and 23% of the Form 3s.

Looking at the figures, 49-36-23, we see a decrease of 13% per level. This seems to indicate that the general improvement is about 13% per level, that is, about 13% of the students cross the threshold level each year. And 23% of the Form 3s remain below threshold level, the level they should presumably have reached by the time they entered Form 1.

Dealing with the 23% is a distressing business. These 23%, apparently, have not benefitted from all their years of junior secondary second-language education. The ensuing questions are: WHO are these students? WHERE do they come from? and WHY have they not improved?

Let us look at three schools for a comparison. The schools have been selected according to their performance in the HKCEE (Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, the fifth form school leaving examination) English Language examination. Schools taking part in the HKCEE have been ranked according to their grades, the number of distinctions, credits and passes.

The three schools chosen represent a high standard, an average standard, and a low standard. School 1 ranked 18th in the total order of all schools participating in the HKCEE. School 2 ranked 121st. School 3 ranked 238th. It must be understood that the schools ranked in this order of achievement, may be said to be in the form of a pyramid where the schools with a high standard, being in a minority, nevertheless have the same 'vertical height' as those schools with a low standard, which are in the majority, and form the base of the pyramid.

For School 1, the Mean Score increases from 46.7% to 66.7% in Forms 1, 2 and 3, showing a significant improvement in ability. The Below Guessing Score is 6% of the total population in Form 1 and only 1% in Form 2, and 0% in Form 3. The Below Threshold score is 17% of the total population in Form 1, and again only 1% in Form 2 and 0% in Form 3. Incidentally, the 1% in the Below Guessing Score and in the Below Threshold Score could be the same student.

The figures show that, at this school, any inadequacies in Form 1 are soon rectified and the students benefit from the education.

For School 2, the Mean Score increases from 29.3% in Form 1 to 44.4% in Form 2 and 60.0% in Form 3. The increase was not as satisfying as in School 1, but nevertheless encouraging. The Below Guessing Score in Form 1 is 24% and in Form 2 only 1% and in Form 3 in Form 3 is 0%, showing that whoever had been found unable to read in Form 1 was adequately educated and able to make porgress from Form 1. The figures in the Below Threshold Score are even more encouraging, 46% in Form 1 and only 8% in Form 2 and 2% in Form 3, showing a remarkable jump in standard from Form 1 to Form 2. It almost sparkles as it tells us how hard the teachers and students have worked.

For School 3, the Mean Scores in Form 1-3 remain low, with only a very slight improvement in Form 3. The most distressing observation is the figures for Form 3: 44% of the entire population at this level stay with the Below Guessing Score and 72% of the entire population (including the 44%) stay with the Below Threshold Score.

At this school, there seems to be little progress in the first year of education and only some minimal progress in the second year. The students have hardly benefitted at all from their education.

We came to the conclusion that there are 4 main areas to look at in order to find the cause of such disappointing results as shown in the case of School 3.

Area A: the basis of language development. The Mean Scores of the three schools studied show that unless students are at the threshold level to start with, little progress can be expected of them. But once they arrive at the threshold level, they can make progress much more easily.

Area B: the SSPAS. Bands (1-5) are used in allocating places in secondary schools. It is not unlikely that the weaker students collect in one school more than in another. If such is the case and weak students gathered in School 3, the standard of second language literacy in School 3 can expectedly be low. One can easily imagine how the little time and effort they could muster would have been spent on Chinese literacy and numeracy rather than second language literacy.

Area C: educational resources. The Principal's priorities, the teachers' proficiency and conscientiousness, the allocation of resources and manpower, and the availability of facilities and additional assistance, are all factors which contribute to the success of failure of education in a school. Each can be considered in isolation as well as in interaction with the others.

Area D: the nature of this study.

A word of warning must be given when looking at the statistics for this study. This is a cross-sectional study and not a longitudinal study. Neither unusual deviations nor individual erraticism has been considered.

School 1

Form	Mean	S.D.	Below Guessing Score	Below Threshold
F.1	46.7%	17.0%	6%	17%
F.2	66.7%	17.4%	1%	1%
F.3	83.2%	15.2%	0%	0%

School 2

Form	Mean	S.D.	Below Guessing Score	Below Threshold
F.1	29.3%	8.7%	24%	46%
F.2	44.4%	13.5%	1%	8%
F.3	60.0%	18.0%	0%	2%

School 3

Form	Mean	S.D.	Below Guessing Score	Below Threshold
F.1 (n = 87)	20.4%	6.1%	68%	97%
F.2 (n = 112)	20.0%	6.1%	73%	92%
F.3 (n = 64)	25.2%	9.9%	44%	72%

Implications for educators

A. Almost half of the students in Form 1 do not have the threshold level abilities in English Language, the instrument of education in many schools; and almost a quarter of the Form 3 students still have not attained threshold level.

To help these students, the sensible thing to do would seem to be to lower the threshold standard so that students with very low standards can start their education with very low English Language standards. If this standardised test were set at a very low standard of English Language, the threshold level would have been lower and many more students would have attained the threshold score.

However, such a measure would entail adjustment in many aspects, such as the restructuring of the syllabus and the rewriting of teaching material for junior secondary schools, and expectations of second language education efficiency would have to be amended to suit the new system. Social expectations of students' second language literacy would also have to be reduced.

On the other hand, half the students have made progress and, happily, have benefitted from the existing system. If the threshold level were to be lowered to meet the needs of the weak half, would they be able to maintain their high standard and not be dragged down?

We all know that everyone has a right to an appropriate education – what we know as a human right. Equality of opportunity means everyone is entitled to what suits him. A strong person is not expected to become weak simply because other people suffer from poor health. No well-off person is expected to become poor simply because there are poor people around him. The good half of the students are not expected to become weak simply because half of the students are already weak.

In a climate of equal educational opportunities, the dilemma seems to lie heavily in the hands of the leaders of education: how to help the weak half without sacrificing the better half.

Setting down two levels of second language literacy and two types of second language education is a possible solution. Such a solution could be expected to invite criticism.

In the administration of such a policy different theories and principles of educational sociology would have to be confronted. The difficulty would be finding a way to convince the public that only by running dual levels would we be able to live up to the goal of educational equality.

B. Resources and manpower are at the moment 'evenly' distributed among schools. each school is entitled to certain funding and to a certain number of staff members. However if some schools have more problems than others. they would need more help and should therefore be given that extra share.

Educators might have to find out which schools are burdened with extra problems and to what extent they need extra help. But before planning any reallocation. the Education Department would need to know how the allocated resources and manpower are functioning at present. how much wastage or abuse there is. and whether a certain amount of reallocation would be suitable. and of course. to what degree can such reallocation be made.

If the quality of education in a school could be measured. there would be a good chance of identifying the needy schools and the needy students. in providing them with the right assistance and helping them to improve quickly. much more quickly than they are able to at the moment.

C. As such a large number of Secondary 1 students do not have the basic abilities necessary for enjoying the existing junior secondary second language education. and certain aspects might need to be reviewed.

The primary schools with severe problems such as rural background. new immigrants. staff inadequacy. wrong methodologies. faulty administration. out-of-date traditions should be identified. Additional assistance must be given to these primary schools. assistance suitable for the particular set-up of the individual school and acceptable to both staff and parents.

D. The last point is aimed at all second language educators. I appeal to those in other Asian countries with second language literacy problems to get together to find out the root causes of the problems and work out answers. Let us put our heads together. exchange views and experiences and share an international outlook.

The People's Republic of China is interested in this standardised test and plans to do research with it in the Republic. Their data and views will be of immense value to us in Hongkong. Bona fide researchers in other countries are welcome to write to me to get a copy of the test at a small fee. Address: Dept. of Chinese. Translation and Interpretation. Hongkong Polytechnic. Hung Hom. Hong Kong.

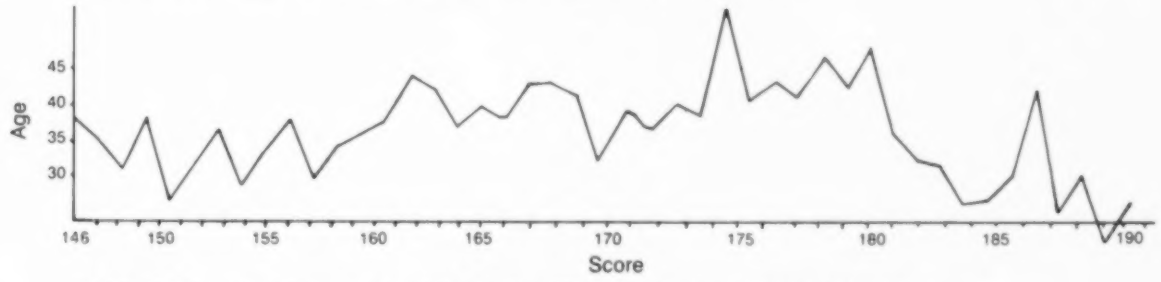
Cheung Yat-Shing
Hong Kong Polytechnic

* * *

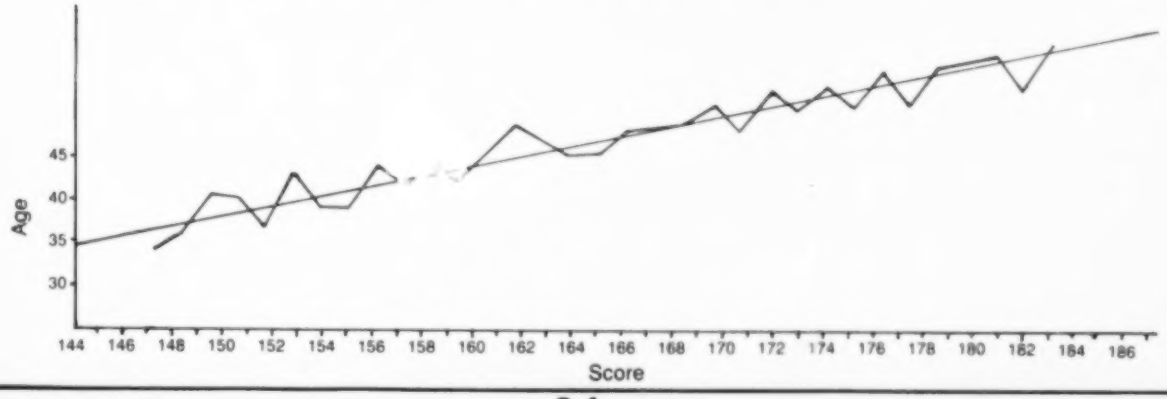
CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin aims at serving Asian reading educators and administrators at all levels. We welcome contributions such as accounts of literacy and reading programmes. analysis of issues. research reports and announcements of future events connected with reading. While the focus of the Bulletin is on Asia. articles with general significance and application will be welcome. Contributions should normally be not more than two thousand words. and accompanied by a brief biographical note. The materials received will be used at the editors' discretion. The deadline for the third issue will be 30 September 1989.

GRAPH A **Age in months plotted against RAT score.**



GRAPH B **Age/Score (<30 and>18 months average deleted)**



The Philippines: 18th National Confab

The Reading Association of the Philippines held its 18th National Summer Convention at the Philippine Normal College (PNC) on 20-21 May, 1988. The focus of this year's gathering was 'The Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Disabilities'. The key-note speaker was Dr. Edilberto Dagot, President of the PNC.

A highlight of this year's confab was the formal organisation of regional chapters as well as the annual election of officers and five new members of the Board.

Frees copies of the annual *RAP Journal* and the semi-annual *Rapporteur* were distributed to all registered participants.

Singapore: The First National Conference on Reading and Literacy

Singapore held its First National Conference on Reading and Literacy on 16 July 1988 at the Marina Mandarin. About 450 people attended, the majority being primary school teachers. Representatives from Brunei were also present. The three-year-old Society for Reading and Literacy published a quarterly news magazine and organised many workshops for school teachers, among other reading promotion activities.

Plans for the Third International Conference on Literacy and Languages in Asia

The third international conference on literacy and languages is planned to be held in 1989, possibly in India. This biennual event, by the Literacy and Languages in Asia Interest Group of the IRA, was first held in Seoul in 1985. The second conference was held in Bangkok in August 1987.

Unesco ROBDAP Asia Pacific Book News, No. 2, 1988

Unesco's Regional Office for Book Development in Asia and the Pacific in Karachi has published its *Asia Pacific Book News, No. 2*. There is a summary of the role played by Unesco in book development in Asia and the Pacific in 1983 - 87. The three main areas of activity of ROBDAP's programme for 1988 - 89 are:

1. Strengthening of book publishing, production and distribution capacities;
2. Training of book personnel; and
3. Creation of an environment favourable to reading.

UNESCO, LITERACY AND THE FOURTH COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION OF NGO'S ON LITERACY

In December 1987, the Fourth Collective Consultation of Non-Governmental Organizations on Literacy held its annual meeting in Bangkok at the Unesco Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROEAP). Eighty-eight representatives of 27 NGO's involved in literacy work in 17 nations were in attendance, including two representatives of the International Reading Association, Dr. Siriporn Limtrakarn President of the Bangkok Council of IRA, and Dr. Alan Crawford, IRA Representative to Unesco, who also serves as Co-Chair of the Collective Consulation and who presided over the meeting.

The meeting began with a review of the activities of the Working Group of the Collective Consultation, which meets twice each year to plan the agenda of the Collective Consultation and to conduct other related business. The Working Group consists of two Co-Chair non-governmental organizations, which cooperate in presiding over meetings, and two Co-Rapporteur NGO's which prepare the written record of the proceedings of Collective Consultations and of Working Group meetings. Among the activities reviewed were NGO declarations presented at the 24th Session of the Unesco General Conference, including the literacy declaration which was signed by the 36 NGO's of the Collective Consultation on Literacy; the use of Unesco funds to provide partial travel grants to seven NGO participants for the Bangkok meeting instead of using the funds to provide simultaneous translation; and the renewal of the Working Group, the process through which one Co-Chair and one Co-Rapporteur organization are selected each year to replace the outgoing organizations.

The representative of the Unesco Secretariat, Maria Luisa Jauregui, then presented a review of actions since the Third Collective Consultation. Among these actions were a report from Mr. Alfonso Lizarzaburu of the International Council for Adult Education, who was sent as an NGO observer to the workshop of specialists in Europe, on the prevention of functional illiteracy and integration of youth into the world of work, which was held in Hamburg in December 1986; the participation of NGO's in the post-literacy project in Tanzania; a feasibility study of creating a network for linking technical and scientific NGO's with NGO's working in the field of literacy conducted by the International Association for Cross-Cultural Communication; and a World Survey on Students' Participation in Literacy conducted by the International Union of Students.

Ms. Jauregui also reported on the significance of International Literacy Year and of the important role of NGO's in the Implementation of the Plan of Action for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000. She described the newly formed International Literacy Task Force organized by the International Council for Adult Education in Toronto. The International Reading Association has also established an ad hoc Committee on International Literacy Year.

Ms. Jauregui's presentation concluded with a spirited discussion of the "Practical Guide To Some Possible Activities During ILY." The Collective Consultation took a strong position in favor of translating the guide into local and national languages and having it printed and distributed by NGO's so that it would reach target groups all over the world. It could also be adapted for suitability for local situations at the grassroots level.

On the second day of the Collective Consultation, the Working Group was renewed with new members. The Co-Chair organizations are the International Reading Association and the Women's International Democratic Federation, represented by Ms. Anna Dourtcheva. The Co-Rapporteur organizations are the International Association of Charities of St. Vincent de Paul, represented by Ms. Marie Claire Guichard, and the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service, represented by Mr. Rao Chelikani. Another organization had been selected to replace the latter NGO; but because of its absence, CCIVS was seated for another two-year term.

A major agenda item was the receiving of project proposals from NGO's. The International Reading Association invited all participants to attend the "Young Professionals Institute on Literacy: Global Issues, Promising Solutions," to be held in Brisbane, Australia, in July 1988. IRA will sponsor a delegate from the Tanzanian post-literacy project to the meeting, and it has also requested travel grants from Unesco for several delegates from NGO's in the developing world. The International Reading Association also announced that it would sponsor an annual Literacy Prize for one of the Tanzanian literacy projects for at least the next three years. IRA is also working on a language experience approach to reading guidebook for adult literacy projects in developing nations where textbooks and trained personnel are not readily available in some areas. The organization is seeking sites for field testing the approach, and several NGO's expressed interest.

The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service introduced a new edition of its *Guide for Voluntary Service* with information opportunities for youth in literacy work. In addition, CCIVS announced the organization of an international voluntary youth work camp to rebuild a Tanzanian post-literacy center with volunteers from several nations in East Africa.

The International Union of Students described plans to conduct a sub-regional francophone literacy training course in West Africa in cooperation with the African Association for Adult Education and Literacy. World Education, Inc., described its reproduction of articles on NGO literacy programs in the its Spring 1988 issue of World Education *Reports* magazine.

Other NGO's in attendance at the Collective Consultation were urged to collaborate with the above-mentioned projects to make them joint or inter-NGO projects.

The final agenda item concerned the Fifth Collective Consultation of NGO's on Literacy. Tentative plans to hold the meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, were confirmed at a March 1988 Working Group meeting of CCIVS; the meeting will be held in early September 1988.

The Collective Consultation then adopted several recommendations, which are summarized below:

1) The Working Group should prepare a written procedure for the renewal process.
2) The Working Group should prepare a description of the objectives and functioning processes of the Collective Consultation as an introduction to future NGO participants.
3) The Secretariat should clarify the format for presentation of inter-NGO projects at the next Collective Consultation.
4) Projects submitted by NGO's were recommended to the attention of Unesco for financial and technical support.
5) The Practical Guide should be translated into indigenous languages and be printed and distributed in cooperation with Unesco National Commissions and concerned NGO's.
6) Regional and sub-regional consultations of NGO's concerned with literacy in the Asian region should be convened on a regular basis.

SEMINAR ON UNESCO, NGO'S, AND LITERACY

In conjunction with the meeting of the Collective Consultation, a seminar on Unesco, NGO's, and literacy was conducted in Bangkok. Seminar participants were greeted by Mr. Makaminan Makagiansar, Regional Coordinator of Unesco. He described a major project entitled Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL), which is working to eradicate illiteracy and provide universal primary education by the year 2000, and to create opportunities for life-long education for all, with particular emphasis on education for women, girls, and the handicapped. The opening address was given by Dr. Visat Kamudamas, Director General of the Department of Non-Formal Education of the Thai Ministry of Education. He described the successful Thai literacy campaign which resulted in their receiving the Unesco Noma Literacy Award in 1987.

Mr. T. M. Sakya, a literacy specialist at the Unesco office in Thailand, made a major presentation on the literacy situation in Asia and the Pacific. He described several projects characterized by cooperation among members states in the region, the regional Unesco office, and NGO's.

On another day, the Thai National Commission for Unesco invited members of the Collective Consultation, observers, and participants in the Seminar to a field visit in the province of Samut Phakarn near Bangkok. After being greeted by the Governor of the province, visits were made to a literacy course for women workers in a fish cannery and to literacy classes in a Buddhist monastery which had established a reading center and a primary school. The participants were provided with warm hospitality at each site.

The seminar was very instructive to all Collective Consultation participants and helped them better understand not only the literacy situation in the Asia-Pacific region, but also the many strong efforts undertaken to combat illiteracy there.

Alan Crawford
International Reading Association

DISCOURSE SIGNALLING IN READING

Reading, one of the phases of language, is related to writing. One reads what has been written. The writer uses signals to help convey what he would like to share with his reader. The reader interprets or gives meaning to what has been written through the help of signals. These signals may be in the form of marks, words or phrases. These signals prove to be helpful in both oral and silent reading. The use of these signals have been tried out by the writer in reading classes from elementary to tertiary levels. The reader's awareness of the uses of these signals helps him to improve his reading speed and comprehension.

Discourse signals may be seen to operate like the traffic lights. With a set of red, yellow and green traffic signs on the street the red light signals the pedestrians to cross the street and the vehicles to stop. On the other hand, the lighted green sign signals the pedestrians to stop and the vehicles to go. In like manner, when the reader sees the phrase 'on the contrary' he knows that an antonym of something or an opposite idea is coming. When he sees 'therefore', he knows that a conclusion is coming.

Some of the commonly used word and phrase signals are listed below:

and	both	indeed	this
but	not only	however	thus
yet	but also	nevertheless	so
or	either	still	consequently
nor	likewise	northwithstanding	hence
neither	furthermore	provided	as a result
although	moreover	as long as	whereupon
whereas	in fact	while	he/she/it
then	second	finally	as regards as
indeed			

The use of some of these signals is shown below:

1. The first problem is simple. *On the contrary*, the second problem is intricate.
(The phrase 'on the contrary' signals that the opposite of the first is coming. So, intricate means complex.)

2. Mr. Cruz is selfish, *while* Mr. Ruiz is benevolent.
(The word 'while' signals that the underlined word benevolent means generous.)

3. All of us are fallible *because* we sometimes make mistakes.
(The word 'because' signals that a reason is coming, so fallible means imperfect.)

A vocabulary development exercise like the one below can be constructed to practise the use of discourse signals.

Directions: Select the word in Column B that means nearly the same as the underlined words in the given sentences. Write on the blank the letter found before your choice.

		Column B
_____	1. The extra catch will only spoil *if* it is not placed in ice.	a. conquered
_____	2. Last night, the cabinet and the committee met to make a last-minute effort to iron out some differences, *but* to no avail.	b. decay
_____	3. Yesterday, a man clutching a hand-grenade hijacked a plane, *but* was subdued eight hours later by aviation security men.	c. harm d. profit e. shoes
_____	4. The girl is shuddering *because* she believes that there is a ghost.	f. trembling
_____	5. He did not wear moccasins; *instead* he wore a pair of slippers.	g. failed.

Signals in these examples help the reader to get the meaning of unfamiliar words. It is understood that other factors may be considered if necessary. The use of common sense, one's experience and others can be considered when called for especially for signals like 'while', 'or', and other words which have one meaning or more.

As pointed out earlier mark (., !, ?, etc.), word, and phrase signals are useful not only in vocabulary development but also in other aspects of oral and silent reading. Writers use these to help convey meanings. It is important that readers are aware of these in order to get the message of the writers.

Victoria Rey
Reading Association of the Philippines

Asian Magazines on Literacy: **NEW LANGUAGE PLANNING NEWSLETTER**

Published by Central Institute of Indian Languages
Address: Ministry of Human Resource Development — Goverment of India, Manasagangotri, Mysore 570 006

REAP — A LANGUAGE LEARNING PROJECT IN SINGAPORE

Summary Information about the Project

Project:	Reading and English Acquisition Programme
Locate:	Singapore
Director:	Dr. Seok M. Ng
Objectives:	1) to determine the progress pattern and English language skills acquired in the first three years of primary school 2) to try out and evaluate a new programme of English language learning 3) to implement and evaluate the new programme
Programme:	Teaching English as a second language to Primary 1 – 3 pupils using a broadly Language Experience Approach, with some modifications
Programme Implementation:	1985, in 90 Primary 1 classes in 30 schools 1987, in 962 lower primary classes in 132 schools
Summative Evaluation:	November 1987
Evaluation Design:	Longitudinal-cum-cross-sectional control experiment, supplemented by qualitative analysis

I. INTRODUCTION: THE READING SKILLS PROJECT (1983)

One of Singapore's problems with reading acquisition programmes stems from the fact that although most of our children come from non-English speaking homes their parents' choice of the medium of instruction is English. This means that English is taught right from the first day the child enters school. Most of the other countries which teach English other than as a mother tongue use the mother tongue as a medium of instruction for several years before the introduction of English. Neither is the Singaporean child totally immersed in English at school because he also spends part of his school time learning a non-English language, namely Chinese, Malay or Tamil. Investigation into problems connected with the teaching of English and reading is therefore very important for Singapore, especially since one of our education system's streaming procedures is instituted very early, at the end of the third year of schooling at Primary 3.

The Reading Skills Project was set up initially to lay the groundwork for such an investigation by obtaining a description of the strengths and weaknesses of our lower primary children's reading skills. In response to a fresh official request to present preliminary recommendations on teaching strategies by mid-1984, the scope of the study was enlarged. Besides collecting data on Primary 1-3 children's reading, it has included a search for reading instruction approaches appropriate for the Singapore classroom, and a systematic observation of reading class activities that included interviews of teachers on reading instruction issues.

By random sampling, 312 children were selected from Primary 1, 2 and 3 in 24 schools representative of four reading levels, High, High Average, Low Average, Low. A range of tests of reading and language, abilities were used: Running Records, the Burt Reading Test, the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, the Diagnostic Decoding Inventory, the Record of Oral Language and Writing Vocabulary.

The cross-sectional data obtained after one and a half years revealed a range of scores on all the tests administered at the three primary class levels. This range of scores which reflected heterogeneity of progress levels was also found within each primary level.

The Running Records

One quarter of the children in Primary 1, 2 and 3 were reading their classroom texts at the Frustration level: i.e., with less than 90% accuracy. These were passages the teacher had recently taught the children to read in class.

Researchers agree that learning is most efficient on instructional material that is easy enough to allow pupils not only to develop fluency and to enjoy reading but also to concentrate on new words and ideas. Therefore it is important for the teacher to procure a set of books that is well graded and suitable for the intended population.

Further support for the use of easy instructional material comes from the analysis of children's self correction behaviour while reading classroom texts. Children self-corrected more on easier texts than on more difficult texts. This is easily evident if it is remembered that the Unfamiliar texts were read with lower accuracy rates than the Familiar texts. In observational studies of children's behaviour, it was found that children were able on their own to detect and correct their errors. As a child corrects an error, he may improve his understanding of the cue systems (e.g. graphic and contextual cues) available to him and the inter-relationships between these systems in reading processes. The ability to detect errors and learn from self correction is a valuable asset to the child because of its potential as an important self-teaching strategy.

The Reading-Related Tests

There were two important findings.

The skills measured in the Diagnostic Decoding Inventory, the Record of Oral Language and Writing Vocabulary were

found to relate highly to reading progress. The better readers tended to score better on these reading-related tests. It is not unreasonable to assume that if effort is made to improve these skills, reading performance may also improve.

The Singaporean children's scores on these tests are understandably below the norms of children from English-speaking countries. A more interesting finding is that the Singaporean child's scores on the measure for Writing Vocabulary compares more favourably with overseas norms than his scores for the Record of Oral Language, the Burt Word test or the Neale test. Any reading programme embarked upon can use this strength of his writing skill to support his efforts in learning to read.

The Neale Test

From the scores of the children on the Neale test, it was seen that the average comprehension score was lower than that for reading accuracy. This provides evidence for the claim that the ability to read accurately does not guarantee comprehension of what is read.

The Relatedness of Reading Skills

The study strongly supports a view that all the skills of reading (decoding, oral language, writing) are interdependent and should not be neglected if reading success is to be assured. It does not support the exclusive emphasis of one skill at the expense of another at any of the Primary 1, 2 or 3 levels.

The linguistic analysis of the children's oral reading errors also shows a relationship between good readers and the ability to use decoding and oral language skills in attacking difficult words encountered in both familiar and unfamiliar texts. Therefore, our reading programme should include teaching strategies aimed at helping children use these reading-related skills in an integrated manner. This emphasis on an integrated system of reading behaviour is essential because it has been found that the good reader is distinguished from the poor reader in the way he builds the subskills into one single process so that the components of the process becomes mutually facilitating instead of a number of unintegrated, independent subskills. Teaching strategies therefore should focus on getting the child to use these subskills (e.g. decoding skills and oral language) in an integrated manner to cope with reading tasks in the classroom.

Educational Implications

As a result of this study, the Language Experience Approach to Reading (LEAR) was recommended by the research team as either an instructional alternative or a supplement to the programmes being used currently in Singapore schools. This approach can provide a pre-reading programme, a foundation for word-attack skills, a gradual introduction of new English vocabulary as well as a whole class approach that also makes provisions for differences in ability. The sound educational principles basic to learning and teaching found in LEAR are:

(a) Motivation is of utmost importance in facilitating learning and in fostering positive attitudes towards future learning and reading. To keep motivation high therefore, learning tasks should be appropriate for the pupil's age and interest. More importantly, children should not be instructed on texts that are too difficult for them.

(b) The approach should be meaning based, emphasizing the important goal of understanding rather than imitating the language.

(c) To sustain interest, much more varied instructional aids and activities should be used.

(d) Reinforcement to facilitate learning should be provided through practice with integrated cross-curricular subject matter (e.g. English, Science, Mathematics) or by consistently integrating the practice of specific skills (e.g. reading, writing, listening and speaking activities) within the general subject area of English language teaching. Judgement has to be made on the units to be taught this way because not every learning unit lends itself easily to the integrated approach. The principle underlying this approach is one of reinforcement and practice not reliance on monotonous repetition.

(e) Any good programme should include the monitoring of progress of the child, obtaining continuous diagnostic information about the child's efforts in the various activities and use of this information to determine follow-up lessons. Early detection of learning difficulties can prevent over-practice of incorrect responses while corrective teaching can help a child back on to the path of learning again.

II. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The Programme

In response to an official request which came during the pilot phase of the Reading Skills Project, the scope of the study was enlarged and recommendations on teaching strategies based on the principles described above were presented by mid-1984. Although the initial study focussed on reading, the overall concern was the teaching and learning of English. The recommendations on teaching strategies were therefore for a language programme to be developed based on the Language Experience Approach but tailored to the language situation in Singapore.

The Reading and English Acquisition Programme (REAP) was implemented in 90 Primary 1 classes in 30 Singapore schools in 1985. By 1987, it was implemented in 962 lower primary classes in 132 schools. It was an attempt to adapt recent ideas in applied linguistics and development psychology to language education.

Adaptation measures involved a Book Flood and the selection of features from the Language Experience and the Shared Book Approaches which were then built into the REAP methodology, the guidelines and materials. The programme was also adapted to the existing curriculum materials. Although there are numerous possible variations in procedure, the teacher in a Language Experience based programme begins a series of activities by providing an experience for the whole class. It is an activity-based approach

which involves the pupil in using language naturally in meaningful situations in both oral and written forms, one form reinforcing the other. In the Reading and English Acquisition Programme, the children were also exposed to a great number of books, a provision based on the Fijian Book Flood Experiment. In the very early stages of the local Programme where the children are unable to read for themselves, the teachers used the Shared Book Approach to provide opportunities for reading acquisition and language learning. Sharing common elements with the Language Experience Approach, the Shared Book Approach emphasises getting meaning from books and the pure enjoyment of them. Selected books are enlarged so that a whole group of children can see the pictures and the print as the teacher reads to them. After initial reading for enjoyment, the numerous Enlarged Books are used to expose children systematically to book language and gradually guide them in reading activities.

To evaluate the effects of this new Programme, a comparison of REAP and non-REAP children's performance on language tasks was made. Children in the REAP classes were taught by teachers trained to carry out REAP teaching techniques while non-REAP classes continued with their usual programme.

The Main Sample

In February 1985, Primary 1 children in 10 REAP and 10 non-REAP schools were tested with the Burt Word Reading Test, a test of reading isolated words. This test was used because it is relatively economical to administer to a large sample of children, although it is acknowledged that isolated word recognition is only one aspect of reading progress. In a previous study, this test was found to correlate reasonably well with other reading and language tasks.

On the basis of scores obtained on this test, the children were alloted to four equally sized quartile groups of reading progress. Stratified random sampling procedures were then used to obtain samples for detailed evaluation, with equal numbers assigned to the following categories: REAP/Non-REAP, PEP/NESPE , Boys/Girls and the four progress groups (High, High Average, Low Average, Low). In this way, some control was possible over sex, progress level and the type of instructional material the children were exposed to.

The Tests

The First Year

The battery of tests used measures the children's performance in the following areas: reading accuracy and comprehension, knowledge of phonics, writing vocabulary and oral language. As before, the tests were the Running Record, the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, the Diagnostic Decoding Inventory, Writing Vocabulary and the Record of Oral Language. In additional, to an instrument Retell-A-Story was developed to measure the children's listening comprehension and oral language. In Retell-A-Story, transcripts were made of each child's attempt at retelling a story that had just been read to him. These retellings were then assessed for the numer of ideas and sentences that were related to the story, for episodes that were related in sequence and for correct grammar. The marking scheme was standardized amongst the markers, three of whom were experienced primary school teachers, to ensure the objectivity of the assessment procedures. All these tests were administered at the end of 1985 by a trained team of testers who had scant knowledge of the exact details of the research design.

A complementary assessment of English acquisition by the REAP and non-REAP children was obtained by administering a common English Language examination to the same sample of 512 children, also in November 1985. This pen-and-paper test, labelled the Group Survey Test, was set by a panel of school teachers and had a structure similar to the usual mid-year and final English language examinations. The following components were tested: reading and listening comprehension, grammatical structure, vocabulary and written composition. Part I of the survey test was similar to the kind of test Singapore school children are used to with most of the test items being objective. Part II was an essay-type task in which children were asked to write about a picture. The Group Survey Test was also given to a larger sample of 4947 children in 40 schools, 20 REAP and 20 non-REAP.

The Second Year

The same 512 children selected in 1985 from 10 REAP and 10 non-REAP schools were again tested in May and Novemer, 1986. Some 1985 tests were dropped from the study; the battery of tests retained were the Burt Word Reading Test, the Record of Oral Language, Writing Vocabulary, the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability and Retell-A-Story. The children also took the pen-and-paper test, the Group Survey Test.

Results

The results for all 3 test stages have a similar pattern (for example see Figure 1) in that higher mean scores were recorded for the REAP children on all the tests with the exception of the Diagnostic Decoding Inventory and the Writing Vocabulary Test in Test Stage 1 (November, 1985). At the end of Year 1 in 1985, statistically significant differences in favour of REAP children were found only for the comprehension scores on the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability and Retell-A-Story. By the end of the second year, statistically significant differences between the two groups were found for these measures as well as the Burt Word Reading Test, the reading accuracy scores on the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability and the Record of Oral Language in Test Stage 3 in November, 1986. (See Table 1). Analysis by progress levels also generally supports this trend. The REAP children in the low progress level, like those in the high, did better than their non-REAP counterparts.

In the Group Survey Test, statistically significant differences in favour of the REAP children were found on this pen-and-paper test. Part I which has components testing reading and listening comprehension, vocabulary and grammar correlated fairly well with the English language examination results of children from 6 randomly selected REAP schools (R = 0.76, p 0.0001). Part II, the written composition was more marked not only for the number of correct words and sentences but also assessed for the number of ideas and sentences that were related to the stimulus picture, and for the variety of syntactic structures used. Analysis by progress levels again showed a consistent trend on the Group Survey Test – REAP children across all four levels of ability scored better than their non-REAP counterparts.

The results of the larger sample of 4947 children on the Group Survey Test support the trends found in the smaller sample. The REAP children scored higher means on all the sub-sections of the test with the sections of vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and written composition showing differences of statistical significance (See Table 2).

TABLE 1: MEANS OF ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF REAP/NONREAP CHILDREN ON BATTERY OF LANGUAGE TESTS NOVEMBER, 1986

TEST		TYPE	N	MAX SCORE	MEAN	S.D.	t	PROB > t
BURT WORD TEST		NON-REAP REAP	249 253	110	34.05 35.80	8.34 9.39	2.21*	0.0278
RECORD OF ORAL LANGUAGE		NON-REAP REAP	125 126	42	12.81 15.87	7.13 7.51	3.32*	0.0011
WRITING VOCABULARY		NON-REAP REAP	249 253	NA	55.56 57.93	19.54 21.04	1.31	0.1914
NEALE	ACCURACY	NON-REAP REAP	249 253	100	46.87 52.62	19.22 21.36	3.17*	0.0016
NEALE	COMPREHENSION	NON-REAP REAP	249 253	44	13.16 15.68	8.03 7.68	3.60*	0.0004
RETELL-A-STORY		NON-REAP REAP	248 252	50	20.15 24.67	12.70 10.82	4.29*	0.0001

*Significant at 0.05 level.

TABLE 2: MEANS OF ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF REAP/NON-REAP CHILDREN ON THE PRIMARY TWO SURVEY TEST (NOVEMBER 1987)

	TYPE	N	MAX SCORE	MEAN	S.D.	t	PROB > | t |
PART I VOCABULARY	NON-REAP REAP	246 251	27	19.89 21.31	5.18 4.41	3.30*	0.0010
GRAMMAR	NON-REAP REAP	246 251	15	9.50 10.45	3.28 3.06	3.33*	0.0009
READING COMPREHENSION	NON-REAP REAP	246 251	25	17.05 18.93	5.38 4.62	4.17*	0.0001
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	NON-REAP REAP	246 251	26	20.60 20.84	3.53 3.10	0.81	0.4156
DICTATION	NON-REAP REAP	246 251	10	6.42 6.86	3.20 3.00	1.60	0.1092
TOTAL SCORE FOR PART I	NON-REAP REAP	246 251	103	73.46 78.40	18.03 15.65	3.26*	0.0012
PART II WRITTEN COMPOSITION	NON-REAP REAP	246 251	NA	51.92 55.73	20.83 20.23	2.07*	0.0394

*Significant at 0.05 level.

Sustained Effects of the Programme

Do the data support the general hypothesis that REAP children perform better than non-REAP children in these tests? Cynics might point to a Hawthorne effect, brought on by the novelty of the supply of attractive books and close monitoring of the teachers. Other studies have shown that the effect of any novel programme wears off in a matter of days or weeks. Assessment exercises carried out over two years should show whether the positive effects were only temporary or whether they will be sustained. In actual fact, the effects are becoming more obvious and appearing in more tests, as indicated by the fact that more tests are showing significant statistical differences. Furthermore, analysis of the descriptive data shows that the gap between the means of the REAP and non-REAP children is wider at the end of the second year than at mid-year (see Figure 1). This is strong evidence which supports the claim that the differences between REAP and non-REAP children lie in the different classroom activities undertaken over the two year period.

Educational Significance of the Programme

The other question which could be asked of this study is whether the gain is of educational significance. This is a complex issue.

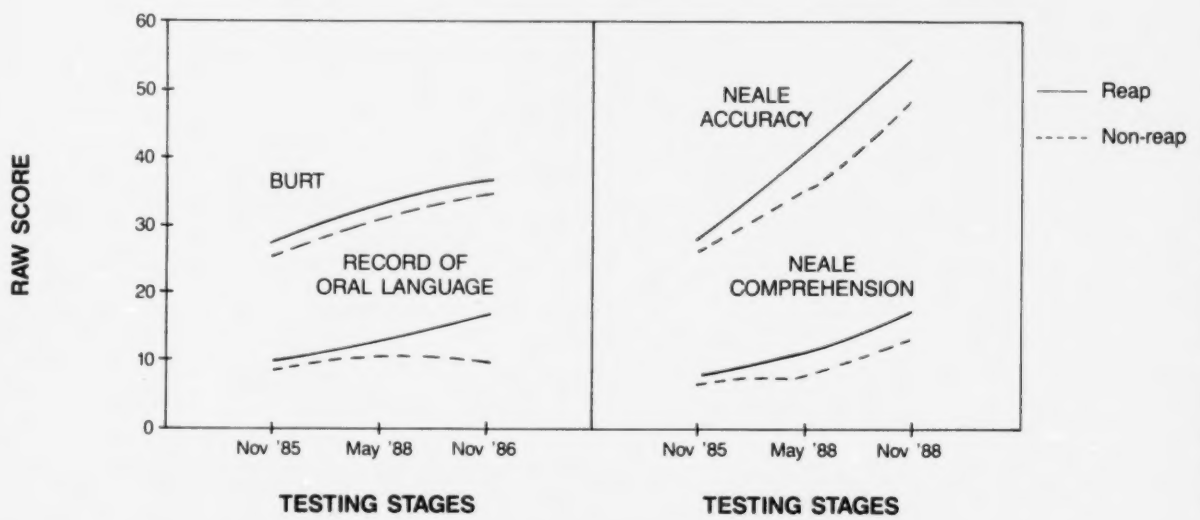
It was envisaged that evaluation exercises of this nature would be difficult to undertake because of the lack of control in field as opposed to experimental studies. It is difficult to estimate the effect of common dissruptive events on children's learning like that of REAP teachers being replaced during the year for medical reasons or pregnancies and REAP schools moving to other premises. The threat of contamination, that is of non-REAP schools using REAP techniques, is very real in this study as indicated by the dramatic increase in the sale of commercially Enlarged Books to non-REAP schools.

It was also found that though generally the REAP teachers implemented the Programme there were known cases of some who did not. Due to limited time and resources (and for reasons of public relations), it was not possible to undertake a detailed survey of all the 400 classes involved in REAP in 1986. However an exploratory study showed that the achievement scores of the REAP children were affected by the degree of implementation of the programme in each classroom. The correlation between the degree of implementation and the achievement scores of the children was 0.85 (p 0.0001). This indicates that in classes where REAP activities were more fully implemented, the children obtained higher scores in the tests.

It can be argued that the net effect of the variables discussed above is that quantitative evaluations of performance cannot be expected to demonstrate dramatic differences between REAP and non-REAP classes. However, if REAP is to be implemented in schools, we have to show that the Programme can actually work in the school setting. This demonstration is very important for the policy maker in Singapore who may doubt that academics and researchers can develop effective teaching methods.

Figure 1:

MEANS OF REAP/NON-REAP CHILDREN ON FOUR LANGUAGE TESTS OVER THREE TESTING STAGES



(Maximum scores: Burt 110, ROL 42, Neale Accuracy 100, Neale Compre. 44)

Besides, REAP is an integrated language arts programme and as such the focus must be not on one but on all of the language skills. If instruction had concentrated on the oral language aspect then dramatic gains would be expected in that select language area, possibly at the expense of the other language skills. The small gains evident over a wide range of measures of language must however, in total indicate a signficant educational impact. The research evidence indicated that:

- the children are better at reading both isolated words and continuous texts (Burt Word Test and Neale).
- they can better comprehend what they can read (Neale and Survey Test)
- they have better listening comprehension (Survey Test, Retell-A-Story)
- they have a better syntactic control of the language (Record of Oral language, Retell-A-Story and Survey Test)
- they write better compositions (Survey Test)
- they have a better grasp of story structure (Retell-A-Story)

The programme holds promise not only for improving the level of literacy, but also for the promotion of enjoyment of reading and learning. The programme provides classroom activities that will foster and develop positive attitudes towards books and learning. This goal is worth achieving because although a programme with emphasis on academic or skill oriented learning shows immediate results, these effects fade in later years, with motivational and attitudinal factors playing a greater role than skill factors in school performance. Because of this children can presently be found in secondary schools who have the required skills for functioning well in school but who do not have the interest or the attitude necessary for sustained effort. This lack of motivation may lead to a decline in the use of skills acquired at an earlier age.

In Conclusion

Controversy among experts in the field over methods of language education is common. However in the case of the Reading and English Acquisition Programme, not only was there common agreement on the teaching methods but members from the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Institute and Institute of Education have been working together to implement the Programme. Positive feedback from members of the British Council, the Regional Language Centre and the National University of Singapore also attest to the viability of REAP as an effective programme for teaching our children English as a Second Language. In the first year of REAP implementation the few problems and reservations some principals had concerning the Programme were outnumbered by favourable response and enthusiasm generated by the introduction of REAP.

However REAP is not without problems, some more easily solved than others. Problems connected with the effectiveness of training sessions for either workshop leaders or teachers, and the suitability of guidelines and books for Programme activities are being met with on-going corrective measures. Similarly sharing sessions with peers has gone a long way towards helping the individual teacher fit REAP activities within each individual set of school and classroom procedures.

The other more daunting tasks are connected with expansion of the Programme to the rest of Singapore schools. Such expansion necessitates involving more people which brings with it increasingly difficult problems connected with maintaining the quality of monitors and the intensity of monitoring teachers. Likewise great effort needs to be expended to maintain the good working relationships necessary for continuing collaborate effort of the various educational bodies working towards implementing REAP. Expansion normally means greater problems of organization with greater danger of breakdown in lines of communication. It is a real challenge for the administrator to keep a delicate balance between the necessity for greater organization and structure and the flexibility that needs to be maintained for successful innovative implementation. These problems though specifically discussed in relation to REAP implementation, also relate to implementation of other educational innovations. Coming to grips with these problems will go a long way toward helping educational authorities understand causes behind the failure of previous educational innovations in Singapore. At the same time, solutions at the REAP level will help Singapore children not only learn English more effectively but also enjoy the process of learning.

To ensure continuing success, there should be no stinting in use of resources to derive continual feedback for improvement of this project. Otherwise this project will join others in the dismal history of educational change and this document will gather dust on the library shelf. Close attention to the process of implementation in the next few years is crucial to the success of this programme which will take us nearer to the goal of quality education for all Singapore children.

Seok M. Ng
Singapore Society for Reading & Literacy

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(This report is compiled from four papers written by Dr. Seok Moi Ng in 1984, 1986 and 1987, presented to various conferences and published in various journals. Acknowledgement is due to Dr. Ng for making available the papers; however, any inaccuracies and emphasis should be attributed to the Editors. Readers interested in the details and the statistical analyses of the project should write to Dr. Seok M. Dawn (nee Ng) at 27A Speddings Road, Tikipunga, Whangarei, New Zealand.)

In the next issue: A Survey of Asian Literacy, the IEA Comparative Literacy Project, Sexism in the Teaching of Mathematics...

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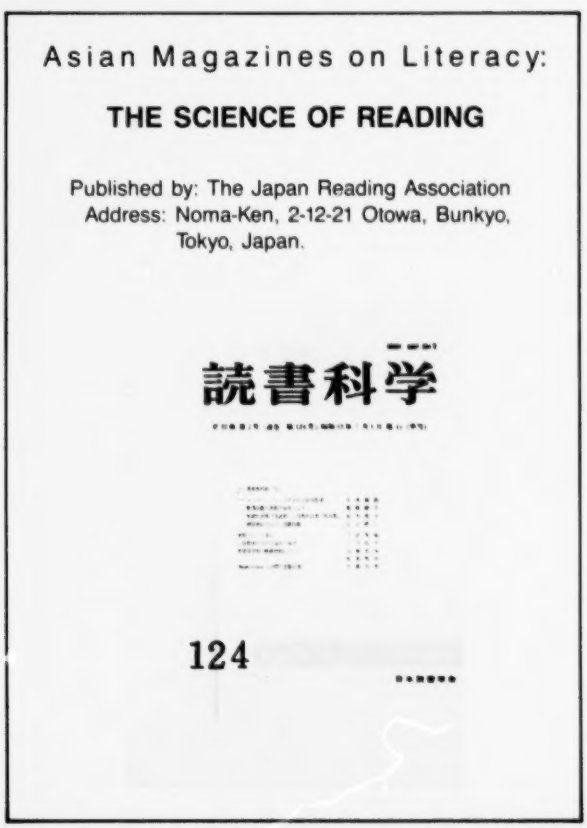

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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JULY 3-6, 1990

Members and other individuals interested in the goals and purposes of the Association are invited to submit proposals for the International Reading Association's Thirteenth World Congress on Reading which will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, July 3-6, 1990.

The Congress theme is "Sharing the Future: Literacy Around the World" and the program will consist of the strands listed below. Proposals should be related to these topics and **targeted toward specific teaching levels.**

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8. Reading and Writing to Learn
9. Teacher as Researcher
10. Literacy and Technology

Proposals may be submitted for the following categories: Institutes, Symposia, Workshops and Sessions. Detailed information related to these categories appears on the back of this page.

Proposals will be judged primarily in terms of international applications and/or focus. The Program Committee will also try to achieve an overall balance in the range of topics, grade levels covered and the geographic distribution of the participants.

Each proposal must consist of:
(1) *An Application Form*- Please use the application form included in this form and make sure all items are filled in completely.
(2) *A Brief Abstract*- (400 words maximum) outlining the content to be presented.
(3) *A Listed of Staff Members*- A list containing complete addresses, including postal codes, of all staff members.

Proposals should be postmarked no later than July 10, 1989 and mailed to the World Congress Program Committee, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19714-8139, USA. Fax: 302-731-1057.

SOME LONGITUDINAL ASPECTS OF READING COMPREHENSION

The development of reading ability should no longer be looked upon as an isolated technical problem of instruction. It should rather be considered a complex process ongoing in an individual from early infancy to old age. There is, as I see it, a dynamic interaction between an individual's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development and the development of his reading ability. Reading skills of different kinds have become increasingly vital factors in the individual's adjustment to life in the world today. Success or failure in attaining elementary reading proficiency may affect his entire behaviour and general attitudes towards his environment. A failure in the early stages of learning to read seems to be closely related to emotional disturbances and personality difficulties of various kinds. It is extremely difficult, however, to determine if personality difficulties are the causes, effects or only concomitant factors of reading disabilities.

Reading ability a series of complex mental activity

Reading ability is not a unitary skill, functioning similarly in different reading situations. It is rather to be looked upon as a series of complex mental activities, which to a very large extent vary with the reader's age and maturity, the kind and degree of difficulty of the reading material and the purpose of reading. In a psychological sense, the reading process includes anything of what is happening from the moment we start to react on the visual stimuli we are confronted with in the form of written or printed words on a piece of paper, up to the product of reading - if I may express it in that way - i.e. the reader's responses on these stimuli in the form of thoughts, feelings, spoken or written words or actions of various kinds.

Reading comprehension—the very heart of the reading process—does not denote a single, well-defined aspect of reading. It is dependent of the reading situation in its widest sense: e.g. the reader's personal competencies including of course a number of basic reading skills, his degree of attention and interest as regards the content, the knowledge and experiences concerning the presented material he already possesses, his needs and his expectations of what the reading might offer to him, and his ability of emotional engagement, interpretation and critical thinking.

Reading comprehension in a broad perspective

We should put reading comprehension in a broad perspective. Reading is closely interrelated with the other language arts - listening, speaking and writing. Therefore it can be argued that adequate instruction for the improvement of abilities in listening, speaking, or writing will be of great value also for the development of reading skills of various kinds, involving thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, critical evaluation and creative, functional uses. There is, for example, a great deal of resemblance between the processes that are significant in listening and reading comprehension. The prerequisite for both is a certain general level of language mastery, a vocabulary that is adequate for the material in question, and a background of intelligence and experience that is sufficient for providing the learner with an opportunity to follow the reasoning being introduced. It is also required in both processes that the learner possesses the ability of active attentiveness and a sufficient level of concentration in order to be able to follow a chain of thoughts.

Differences as to skills required in reading and listening comprehension

In reading comprehension, there are, however, some further skills that must be acquired over and above what is required in listening. The reader must first master the different letters as well as a certain technique of approaching a text, in order to be able to identify and comprehend what kind of words and phrases he is confronted with, before he can arrive at an understanding of the message contained in the printed or written material.

Furthermore, the reader must try to organize the textual material in such a manner that whatever thoughts, opinions, or facts it may contain, the text can be understood. A speaker offers the listener much more help in this regard by means of phrasing, raising and lowering his voice, gestures, facial expressions, etc. And another difference between listening and reading is: The speaker determines the rate of listening. In reading one is allowed to determine by oneself which speed is most appropriate in order to comprehend the written message. The reader has therefore, especially when it concerns difficult material, evident advantages over the listener. He can slow down the rate and reread the difficult parts again and again. But the use of flexibility as regards the rate of reading, depending on the difficulty and the purpose of reading, must be systematically taught. It should not be left to chance, as is often the case in our schools.

The comprehension in listening is, generally speaking, better than in reading in the beginning phases of the development of reading ability. But as higher maturity levels are reached, and the more mechanical aspects of reading ability are improved of reading skills, reading tends to be superior to listening, especially when it concerns comprehension of more difficult material.

This development is by no means automatic, though learners have to overcome a number of difficulties in reading techniques in order to arrive at a better understanding in reading than in listening. We should not forget that a number of competencies required for reading comprehension develop at varying rates in different students. We have to observe both intra-individual and inter-individual differences of a considerable magnitude through all developmental phases of reading comprehension.

Many intelligent children with reading disabilities have never acquired the basic decoding skills that are prerequisites for effective reading. They stay away from what appears to them as unsurmountable barriers or unnecessary efforts. Consequently, they prefer to learn whatever they need by listening. Such children are in particular in need of continuous, individualized attention and guidance by skilful teachers throughout the grades in school. The systematic teaching of reading comprehension should not cease after the third grade, as is the case in many countries.

Language development in the early years and reading comprehension

The development of the ability of understanding and getting meaning out of language is a lifetime process, extending from infancy through adulthood. But lack of verbal stimulation and training in the early years of life may seriously hamper an individual's growth of reading performance later on - yes, indeed, his personality development as a whole.

There is enough evidence to give us reason to state that a child's progress in learning to read is to a considerable extent dependent upon his experiences with the use of the spoken word in his preschool years. Thinking and language develop in intimate interaction.

Children living in homes on a low cultural level, where the adults are speaking a poor language, characterized by a great paucity of ideas and thoughts, will be handicapped. A poor verbal environment, where the adults seldom speak to the child and the conversation is limited in extent and variety, will negatively influence the child's development as to speaking ability and consequently cause great reading problems.

Learning to read is for most children the very first encounter with a type of learning involving abstract symbols, intended to be associated with previous experiences. If the child has not been given the opportunities to acquire such a background of meaningful concepts, and if the words presented in print are not a part of his speaking vocabulary and used with real adequate understanding, he will most likely be handicapped in his reading efforts from the very beginning. A person who is reading must be able to associate printed symbols with their linguistic meanings. The reader does not grasp the meaning of the printed or hand-written text, unless he also understands the linguistic units that are represented by the written symbols in their descriptions of subjects, actions, ideas, feelings, thoughts etc. A satisfactory ability to listen, see, and speak is fundamental in learning how to read and write. Without proper skills of this kind, failures in the first stages of learning to read can be predicted.

Prevention of reading disabilities through reading readiness programmes

Many children who fail at school in the introductory learning activities are human songbirds, who never learned how to sing, as an old proverb in my country expresses it. Language is not only something to be learned, it is a tool of learning. Herein lies the tremendous importance of the teaching of reading. For without reading, children are deprived of adequate opportunities to develop in accordance with their potential resources - intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

It should be in the greatest interest of every nation to increase its efforts toward the prevention of reading disabilities, thereby diminishing the need of economically expensive remediation later on. A significant first step would be to have national and international information campaigns started as to the importance of a language-stimulating environment in the early years of life. A second step should be a fully articulated reading and writing readiness program, not later than at 3-4 years of age, arranged by the combined efforts of parents, preschool and school. As it has been previously emphasized, a child must have reached a certain level of maturity before he is ready to acquire complex reading and writing abilities without too many difficulties.

Although there are great differences between alphabetic languages as to their degree of letter-sound correspondence, an elementary reading and writing programme in most languages is based upon the following prerequisites: 1) that the child's ability to listen attentively to sounds and linguistic signals is sufficiently developed, 2) that he can imitate and understand these signals, 3) that he can speak reasonably well, 4) that his vocabulary is sufficiently large, 5) that he has a certain capacity for distinguishing and discriminating visually, and 6) that his motor capacity has reached a satisfactory level of development.

Early diagnosis and early adequate treatment key to teaching reading comprehension

The concepts of school maturity and reading readiness should be looked upon as relative and not as absolute. Concepts and requirements of this kind should be considered in terms of learning and adjustments of various kinds that the first year curriculum demands of beginners – and, even more, the adjustments the school is prepared to make to the prerequisites of the children. Taking into account the observed great differences as to maturation and abilities in various respects between children of the same age, I am of the opinion that the use of a fixed chronological age as a criterion of a child's readiness for school entry and learning to read should be opposed, regardless of wether a country has chosen four, five, six, or (as e.g. in the Scandinavian countries, Soviet Union and Poland) seven years of age as the delimiting factor for school entry. It seems to me that a flexible time for starting school and a slow and successive introduction of pupils from the preschool to the school is the only reasonable administrative policy to be recommended, in order to diminish the number of cases of reading failures.

During his first days in school the child should not have cause for anxiety and ill-feeling because of tasks that are beyond his ability. On the contrary, he should be given confidence that he has the resources to benefit from what the school can offer. Every child should be given the opportunity to feel the great satisfaction and motivation for continued work that is connected with success. And that means that the teacher has to fulfil, both in the beginning situation and later on in school, the hard but essential task of establishing proper relationships between the child's capacities and the tasks he is expected to perform.

Even if the majority of the children are ready to be taught reading, when they start school, there are always some who have not reached the desired readiness level for various reasons. Whatever the reasons for their lack of readiness, the school must let them get a calm and cautious start in reading and stimulate their development toward reading readiness in all possible ways, before formal instruction in reading starts. Otherwise, these children run a big risk of becoming "failures" and of developing a lifelong dislike of reading. The need for organizing instruction to adequately provide for individual differences between and within children as to various capacities, background experiences, and personality traits is evident and urgent. In order to be able to provide learning steps, methods and procedures suited to the individual learner the teacher has to use a dignostic approach. Early diagnosis and early adequate treatment is the key.

Shortage of measuring instruments for reading comprehension and deficiencies of teacher education

The concept of reading-readiness is to be applied not only to the beginning stages of reading but to all levels in all subjects also through adult life. The teacher is expected to ask himself, at all points, wether the individual is adequately mature to grasp the content of the reading text, to incorporate it with his earlier knowledge and experiences and to gain both an understanding from the reading and the ability to put his understanding to use. This continuous diagnostic approach should also be applied to the teacher's guidance of the student's development and to the student's interests and tastes in recreational reading in or out of school.

Ideas of this kind are accepted by nearly everyone. They may even sound so trite and obvious that they are not worth re-stating. To put them into practice is another matter, however, at least in my home country, Sweden. Even if the teachers seem to accept these views in theory, many of them are not able to apply them in their classes. Out of prohibiting factors I may mention an evident shortage of suitable instruments for measuring reading comprehension, especially at the upper grades of the compulsory school, the gymnasia and the universities, and insufficient emphasis in teacher education on vertical aspects of reading comprehension activities through all schooling periods.

Much remains to be done in this respect. It is encouraging to note, however, that the school authorities during the last few years have shown an increased interest in supporting suggestions for improvement of teacher education concerning the important basic reading skills throughout school. Not surprisingly, most teachers at middle grades and upward, devote too little time to instruction in reading comprehension on actual subject matters. Students therefore often run into difficulties in reading for understanding of subject-based text assignments.

Continuous teaching of comprehension skills through all study levels

Reading comprehension requires a continuous development of many inter-related skills. Very few students are able to advance to higher comprehension levels without systematically arranged exercises and without proper guidance by a well educated teacher. Comprehension skills should be taught from the very first days of reading lessons and through all study levels. This teaching should be carried out in a sequential form, if the pupils are to be independent and accurate in the use of different comprehension skills. The systematical teaching and reteaching of all comprehension skills through all grades are indispensable for the development of an efficient reader.

As teachers we should regard it as a primary duty of ours to convey to our students a notion that a student who reads, understands, and remembers most details is not, for that reason, necessarily an effective and good reader. Rather, a good reader is someone who understands just what is required for the purpose of a certain kind of reading, and who can successfully vary his modes of reading to fit the level of difficulty of each text as well as the purpose of the reading assignment.

The teacher should therefore, already at the elementary level of reading instruction, condition the students to reflect what they want to gain, in each particular instance, from what they are reading, and consequently to select the most appropriate approach in their reading. Silent reading should not be employed merely to keep students occupied, with no other directives from the teacher than "When you have read this section once, read it once more again!" No purpose, no motive, used to be given for such re-readings. It can, no doubt, be valuable to re-read a text several times. However, in our schools of today we should not request that students re-read a text without a clear purpose being identified and stated. Reading without motives is like a ship without a rudder; it moves ahead, but it has no definite goal. The purpose with the reading, the motive, must be identified and accepted by the reader first; then does reading become really effective. If this viewpoint would be acknowledged by the student, it compels the teacher not to withhold questions that are related to the reading material as some kind of a secret, which will be revealed only some time after the reading is completed. Rather, the rule should be that the goal for the reading be clearly stated before any reading begins.

Eve Malmquist
Linköping University
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(This is part of a longer article. The rest deals with exercises for different levels of reading. The entire article can be obtained from the author whose address is: Department of Education and Psychology, Linköping University, 581 83 Linkoping, Sweden – Ed.)

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF IDAC

Dear Colleagues:
It gives me great pleasure to write a few lines to you. I would like to extend my best wishes to each of you.
Let me express my sincere appreciation to Mr. William Cheng, IDAC Immediate Past Chair, and his staff for Asian Literacy & Reading Bulletin. I believe that this Asian Bulletin will be taken on with full support from various sources in order to promote literacy and reading in Asia.
I sincerely hope that close co-operation among IDAC members and educators will enable us to reach the goal of promoting literacy and reading in this part of the world. Thank you for your contribution and co-operation.

Siriporn Limtrakarn

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Siriporn Limtrakarn)

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR 1990

A SURVEY OF ASIAN LITERACY

Yu Fong-ying,
Hong Kong Reading Association
(with the assistance of Olivia Lee)

1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy has always been one of the main concerns of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) since its establishment in 1946. An idealistic and wide-ranging policy framework was developed by its first Director, Julian Huxley. His desire to spread 'scientific humanism' through a change in the world's traditions soon found a correlate in the stress on fundamental education and a mass campaign against illiteracy. Directors after him were to follow the same emphasis, albeit with different perspectives. The Fundamental Education programme (1946-58) was followed by the 10-year Experimental World Literacy Programme (1965-1975). In this Programme, there were over 40 different projects conducted in various parts of the world. A concise description of the experience of the programme can be seen in the booklet The World of Literacy (IDRC, 1979).

Despite the gain in the years, illiteracy is still a world problem. Unesco estimated in 1985 that there were over eight hundred million adult illiterates in the world. Some 618 million of them lived in Asia and the Pacific. This constitutes about three-quarters of the total illiterate adult population of the world. While the aggregate literacy rate of the countries of the region has risen over the last 15 years, the number of adult illiterates (15 years and over) has also increased by about 80 million.

As part of the continuing effort to reduce illiteracy, Unesco will declare 1990 World Literacy Year. The plan is to renew the energy of the peoples towards the goal of obliterating illiteracy by the year 2000.

The aim of this working paper is to assemble the basic statistics concerning illiteracy in some countries in Asia, discuss the factors involved in the promotion of literacy, and attempt a critical discussion of the plan of eradicating illiteracy.

First, the question of definition. William Gray's definition (1965) still stands: 'A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group.' (Gray, 1956, p.19). It is a definition opted for by Unesco, which also recognises literacy as a matter of degree, rather than a matter of have and have not: '...(L)iteracy is a characterisitic acquired by individuals in varying degrees from just about none to an indeterminate upper level. Some individuals are more literate or less literate than others, but it is really impossible to speak of literate and illiterate persons as two distinct categories.' (Unesco 1957, p.18)

It is usually understood that there are minimally two stages in literacy: minimum and functional. 'At any minimum level, literacy may be vaguely defined as "ability to read and write in a language" ... modifed by specifying a certain level above the absolute minimum ... such as to read and write ... "a simple message".' (Unesco 1957, p.19) The second stage is 'functional literacy' as defined by Gray above. It is much higher than any minimum level. For example, a functionally literate person 'n a developed country may '(understand) world affairs through learning about things and events both near and far, other people and their ways, and the natural and social forces that influence life'. (Unesco 1957, p.20)

In taking world population census on literacy, individual countries use their own definitons, which may be of different kinds: number of years of schooling, calibration against a standardised reading test, or a simple definition of minimum literacy level.

This paper draws mainly from Unesco's Statistical Yearbooks and a few other sources. Data for a number of countries are incomplete. It is hoped that the gaps will be filled in a revised paper.

2. THE NEAR-PRESENT SITUATION

Table 1 shows some of the basic characteristics of some of the Asian countries in figures.

There are demographic, economic, social and political factors set along side the illiteracy rate of 19 countries or subregions. There is an enormous range in all the indicators: there is probably more variation in the Asian continent than any other continents.

The relation among the factors is of course very complex. A simplistic model may begin with population size, moving on to births, then economic and educational provisions and finish with literacy as the dependent variable. In other words, it may go like this: the smaller the population, the lower the birth rate, the higher the economic growth, the better the education and the lower the illiteracy rate.

To be sure, there is a significant correlation between literacy rate and some indicators. For example, in the countries enumerated, it is found that the rank correlations between illiteracy rate on the one hand and population size, infant mortality, per capita GDP are 0.5, 0.71 and 0.68 respectively (all significant at the 5% level). But real GDP growth rate does not seem to be significantly related to literacy. Literacy, being a socially-determined phenomenon, will be associated with other social indicators, to no one's surprise. What cannot be unambiguously asserted is the strengths of the relationships and their inter-relationships. Quantative modelling of literacy outcomes is at a beginning stage, but Fishman (1977) on the spread of English and Fuller et al. (1988) on the relation between literacy and economic growth are interesting attempts.

Religion and language are set beside literacy rates in Table 2.

Here, it can be suggested that religion may be indirectly linked to illiteracy. A woman educator in Pakistan writes: 'Females constitute the largest group of illiterates in Pakistan, and according to the 1981 Census, literacy rate among females in the country was only 16% and that of rural females as

low as 7.3% ...women generally carry a low self-image in a patriarchal society like Pakistan, and therefore have a low aspiration.' (Hussain, 1987, p.3) Here, too, lies the hint of the relationship between religion and a patriarchal form of society. Certainly, countries professing the same faith have different successes with literacy. The relationship, once again, is not direct.

Language and writing script seem to bear little relationship with literacy, looked at at this macro-level and in a rather simple way. But it is worth pointing out that a seemingly reasonable statement such as the following is systematically ambiguous when it may suggest that one form of script is superior to another: 'If the graphic symbols the beginning reader has to learn to identify are very complex, with many strokes, curves and serifs in each of them, his task will be much harder than if they are relatively simple.' (Feitelson, quoted in Gayfer et al. 1979, p.57) Logographic symbols are on the whole more complex than alphabetic ones, but that need not necessarily be a deterent to learning to read and write.

The literacy trend in the ten years between 1970 - 1980 or so has been one of progress (see Diagram 1), although the average yearly rate varies from 0.21 to 1.62. (Table 3) The gain rate per se is not informative, since it is obviously more difficult to make noticeable gains when the literacy level is already rather high (in the Phillippines), and conversely, to make big strides at a lower level (in Sarawak).

What is disturbing, though, is that the population growth rates of many countries look set to outstrip the gain in literacy rate. Here, though the figures are not strictly comparable, a general idea of the future can be gauged, and it is none too bright.

From this largely statistical panoramic survey of some Asian countries, a number of factors can be listed as being relevant to literacy. First, there are demographic factors: population size and growth rate, and sex. (As this survey deals only with adult illiteracy, age structure and schooling are not included; they should figure in any complete study.) Then the economic factor indicated by average GDP/GNP per capita. Economic growth rate will have to be examined in greater detail. It is supported in Fuller's study but not in our simple correlational calculation. Of the social factors: structure of society, urbanisation (see Table 4 below) are important factors. Concomitant phenomena are: infant mortality rate and communication pattern (number of telephones per 100 population, signifcantly correlated to the extent of 0.69 at the 5% level). Religion will have to be examined for the way it structures society. Language and script are given, and probably not significant. Other factors to be investigated include educational expenditure (see Table 4 below) and defence expenditure.

The observations agree broadly with published results. Two groups stand out in many studies: women and the rural people. Both groups are heavily deprived of opportunities to becoming literate. (Unesco, 1985)

TABLE 1: BASIC STATISTICS OF SOME ASIAN COUNTRIES/SUBREGIONS

Country/subregions	Population (in M) (Growth rate) 1985 unless	% illiterate 15+ (M) (F) 1985	Per Capita GDP (US$) 1985	Infant mortality rate(per 1000) 1985-90	Defence Expenditure GNP/GDP (%)
Afghanistan	NA	76.3 (61.1)(92.2)	NA	NA	6.9
Bangladesh	101.1 (2.6)	66.9 (56.7)(77.8)	152	122	1.8
Brunei	0.2 (2.7)	22.2 (14.8)(31.0)*	NA	17.5	8.1
Burma	39.5 (2.4)	29.0 (15.9)(41.7)*	186	82	3.9
China Mainland	1044.1 (1.0)	30.7 (17.6)(44.5)	272	33	1.6
Hong Kong	5.6 (1.8)	14.1 (7.0)(21.6)♠	6311	11	
India	761.2 (1.8)	56.5 (42.8)(71.1)	252	106‹	3.9
Indonesia	165.5 (1.6)	25.9 (17.0)(34.6)	529	76‹	3.0
Laos	4.4 (2.4)	16.1 (8.0)(24.2)	136*	110	NA
Malaysia	15.1 (2.2)	26.6 (19.1)(34.0)	2007	26	5.9
(Peninsula Malaysia)		27.0 (16.7)(36.9)			
(Sabah)		45.0 (35.8)(55.4)			
(Sarawak)		48.9 (38.4)(59.2)			
Nepal	16.5 (2.3)*	74.7 (61.3)(88.1)	138	144	1.3
Pakistan	101.7 (2.2)	70.4 (60.1)(81.4)	312	108	7.1
Philippines	54.7 (2.3)	14.3 (14.0)(14.6)	588›	42	1.5
Singapore	2.6 (1.2)	13.9 (6.6)(21.4)	6826	10	5.8
Sri Lanka	16.4 (1.8)	12.9 (8.8)(17.3)	371	30	1.7
Thailand	51.6 (1.7)	9.0 (5.8)(12.2)	752	42	4.2
Vietnam	59.5 (1.9)	7.6 (7.2)(7.9)	NA	76	NA

*1981 + 1973 ♠ use of term 'no schooling/kindergarten' instead of 'illiterate'

‹1982-84 for India and Indonesia *1984 for Laos ›GNP

Sources:
1. *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, Paris. Relevant years.
2. *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics*, by Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong, Government Printer, Hong Kong. Relevant years.
3. Morrison, C.E. (ed.) *Asia-Pacific Report*. East-West Center, Honolulu, 1987.

TABLE 2: LITERACY, RELIGION AND LANGUAGE

Country/subregion	Main religion	Language, Script	% illiterate 15+ (1985)
Afghanistan	Islam	Pashto (Indo-European, Iranian) Perso-Arabic script, alphabetic	76.3
Nepal	Hindu	Nepali (Indo-European, Indic) Sanskrit, Hindi, alphabetic	74.7
Pakistan	Islam	Bengali (Indo-European, Indic)	70.4
Bangladesh	Islam	Bengali (Indo-European, Indic) Sanskrit, Hindi	66.9
India	Hindu	(Hindi-Urdo-European) Sanskrit	56.6
China		Chinese (Sino-Tibetan) Chinese, logographic	30.7
Burma	Buddhist	Burmese (Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman) Burmese, alphabetic	29.0
Malaysia	Islam	Malay (Malayo-Polynesian, Western) Roman alphabet	26.6
Indonesia	Islam	Indonesian (Malayo-Polynesian) Roman alphabet	
Brunei	Islam	Malay (Malayo-Polynesian) Roman alphabet	22.2
Laos		Lao (Sino-Tibetan, Tai) Mons alphabet	16.1
Philippines	Catholic	Tagalog (Malayo-Polynesian) Roman alphabet	14.3
Hong Kong		Cantonese (Sino-Tibetan, Chinese) Chinese, logographic	14.1
Singapore		Malay Chinese English Tamil (Dravidian)	13.9
Sri Lanka	Buddhist, Hindu	Sinhalese (Indo-European, Indic) Sanskrit	12.9
Thailand	Buddhist	Thai (Sino-Tibetan, Tai) alphabetic	9.0
Vietnam		Vietnamese (Austro-Asiatic) alphabetic	7.6

3. ASIAN LITERACY IN THE YEAR 2000

What are the prospects of a literate Asia in the Year 2000? Unesco has made an estimate of the likelihood of countries reaching different levels of literacy by then. I have not been able to find the basis for the projection, and will only speculate from the available figures. Table 4 shows three groups of countries which are said to be reaching certain literacy levels round about certain times.

I have set against those groups of countries some relevant indicators. Table 3, which compares average literacy gain rate with population growth rate, already paints a none too rosy picture. Here, I just wonder why Burma, Vietnam and Laos appear where they are. The picture I try to draw by bringing some of the factors together is that the combined force of an initially low illiteracy rate, a large urban population, a low commitment in educational expenditure will be advantageous to the acquisition of literacy. They will be neccessary conditions.

4. DISCUSSION- FORMULATING THE QUESTION

This paper looks only at some variables which impinge on the literacy scene. Some variables can only be descriptive. What is needed is an explanatory model that drives literacy efforts. In recent years, people have called into question the traditional views of literacy. The cultural action approach of Paulo Frierer (for a recent statement, see Frierer and Macedo, 1988) has been a major motiving force in literacy campaigns. Huxley's ideal of spreading the noble truths no longer holds attraction. Nor does the approach to just increase the

consciousness to ask 'literacy for what' lies at the heart of more newly-started projects.

To my way of thinking, the new direction is to be applauded. In the Asian context, it will have to be married to the situations of the various countries. The wave of energies released by the movement of nationalism and nation-building after World War Two has somewhat been spent. As observed by a commentator, 'a central political task of most developing countries in Asia remains the fashioning of a widely accepted framework for selecting leaders, setting national priorities, and resolving policy disputes. Few of the parliamentary and presidential systems that came with independence have survived, because most did not have roots in the political values and practices of Asia. Current political struggles may be an inherent and necessary part of a process through which national political values are being created and more strongly rooted, indigenous institutions are being established.' (Morrison, 1987, p.16) This analysis takes us to the theme of tradition. Tradition not just as values to draw from, but values on which to define and shape our new goals. Only when the goals have been defined can we place the various factors in their place and build for use a model of literacy.

Asian Magazines on Literacy:

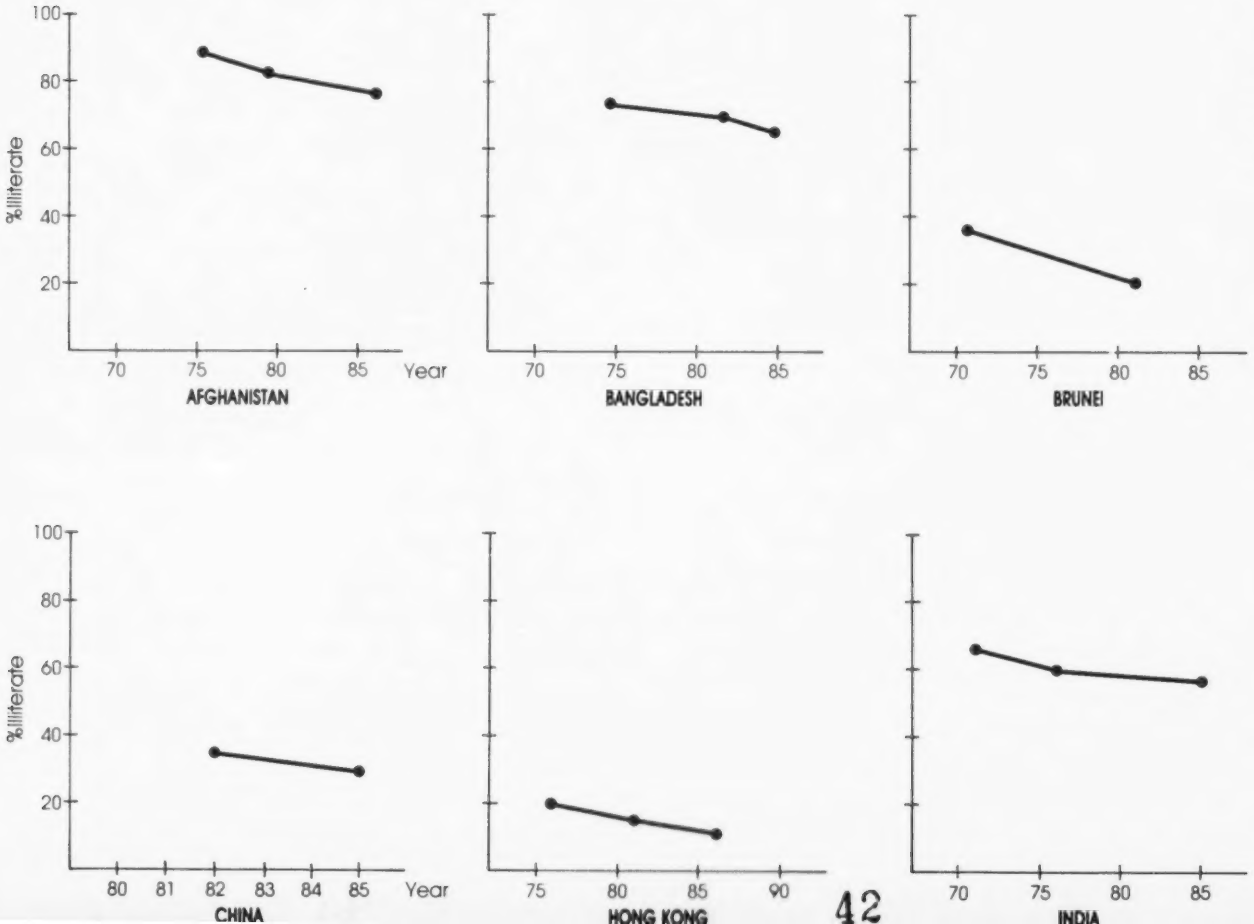
閱讀通訊 14

Reading Association Newsletter

HONG KONG READING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Published by the Hong Kong Reading Association. Address: c/o Dept. of Chinese, Translation & Interpretation, Hong Kong Polytechnic, Hung Hom, Hong Kong.

DIAGRAM 1: LITERACY TREND IN SOME ASIAN COUNTRIES (1970-1985)



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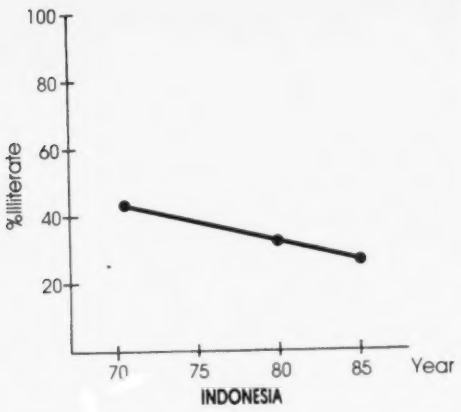

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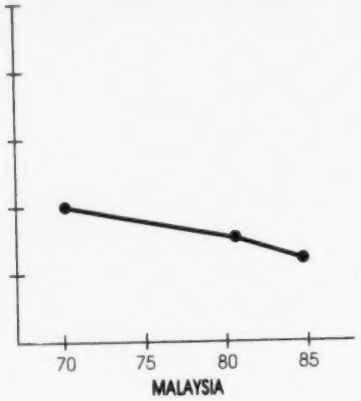

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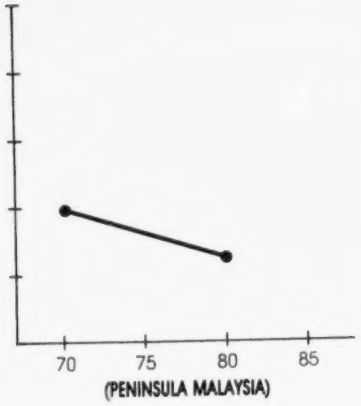
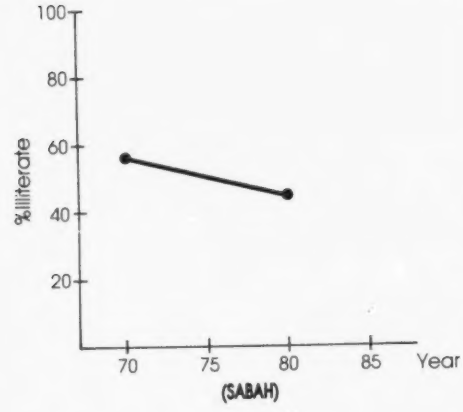


(PENINSULA MALAYSIA)



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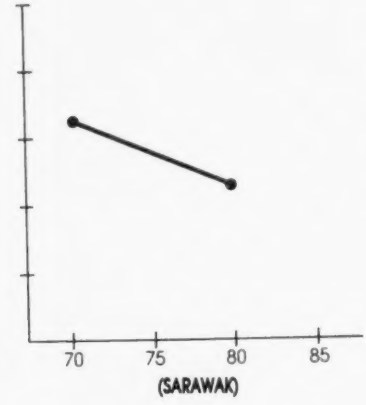

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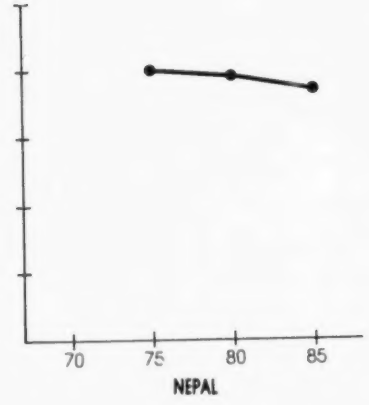

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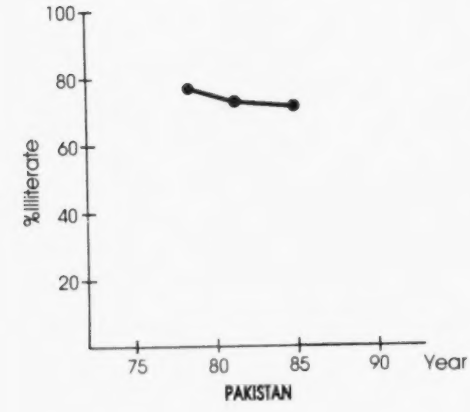

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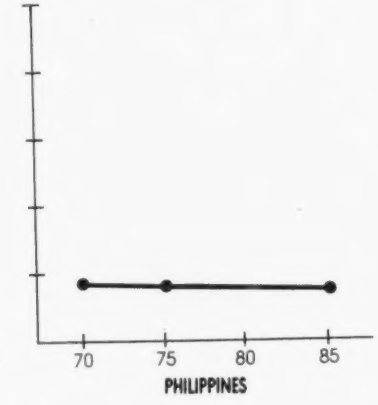

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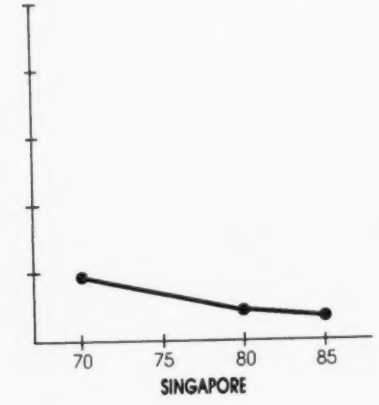

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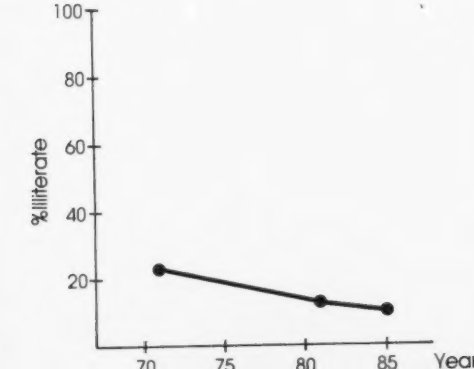


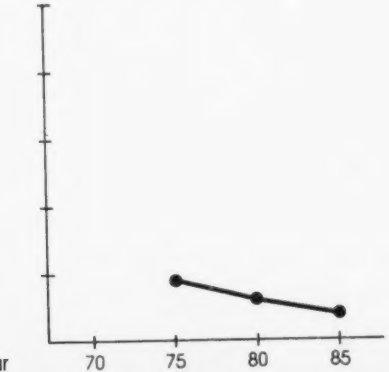


TABLE 3: RATE OF LITERACY GAIN IN SOME ASIAN COUNTRIES/SUBREGIONS

Country/subregions	Ave. Literacy Gain per Year (%) 15+	Population Growth Rate (1985-90)*	% of Lessening of Disparity between M & F (1970-1980)
Afghanistan	1.15 (1975-1985)	NA	-9.8
Bangladesh	0.66 (1974-85)	2.6	0.3
Brunei	1.39 (1971-1981)	2.7	NA
China Mainland	1.27 (1982-85)	1.0	NA
Hong Kong	0.61 (1976-1986)	1.8	8.1
India	0.67 (1971-1985)	1.8	-1.0
Indonesia	1.25 (1971-1985)	1.6	4.9
Malaysia	1.03 (1970-1985)	2.2	5.9
(peninsula Malysia)	1.45 (1970-1980)	NA	NA
(Sabah)	1.07 (1970-1980)	NA	NA
(Sarawak)	1.62 (1970-1980)	NA	NA
Nepal	0.64 (1975-1985)	2.3	-8.7
Pakistan	0.74 (1978-1985)	2.2	-2.3
Philippines	0.21 (1970-1985)	2.2	1.3
Singapore	0.69 (1970-1985)	1.2	8.3
Sri Lanka	0.68 (1971-1985)	1.8	4.3
Thailand	0.95 (1975-1985)	1.7	4.2
Vietnam	NA	1.9	2.6

NA=not available
*Based on United Nations medium variant projections

Sources:
1. 'Illiterate population 15 years of age and over and percentage of illiteracy by sex'. In *UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks*, Paris. Relevant years.
2. *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics*, by Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong. Government Printer, Hong Kong. Relevant years.
3. *Literacy Situatioin in Asia and the Pacific- Regional Overview*. UNESCO, Bangkok, 1985.

Table 4: Some Indicators and UNESCO's Forecast of Literacy Growth

Country/subregion	% Illiterate 15+ (1985)	Urban pop % 1985	Pop % growth 1985-90	Real GDP % growth rate 1982-5	Educational expenditure (Year)
Group A					
Brunei	22.2	59.4	2.7	NA	2.0 (1984)
Burma (?)	29.0	30.0	2.4	5.4	1.6 (1977)
Hong Kong	14.1	90.8	1.8	5.5	2.8 (1984)
Korea, Republic of	NA	65.3	NA	8.5	NA
Malaysia	26.6	31.5	2.2	5.5	6.6 (1985)
Philippines	14.3	39.6	2.3	-2.7	1.3 (1985)
Singapore	13.9	74.2	1.2	4.7	4.4 (1982)
Sri Lanka	12.9	21.1	1.8	5.0	3.1 (1985)
Thailand	9.0	15.6	1.7	5.3	3.9 (1983)
Group B					
China (PRC)	30.7	21.0	1.0	NA	2.9 (1985)
Indonesia	25.9	25.2	1.6	5.0	2.0 (1981)
Vietnam (?)	7.6	20.3	1.9	NA	NA
Group C					
Afghanistan	76.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bangladesh	66.9	11.9	2.6	5.5	1.9 (1985)
India	56.5	25.5	1.8	5.6	3.7 (1985)
Laos (?)	16.1	15.9	2.4	7.3	NA
Nepal	74.7	5.8	2.3	2.5	3.0 (1985)
Pakistan	70.4	29.8	2.2	6.5	2.1 (1985)

According to UNESCO's forecast:
Group A- Full literacy achievable by 1990 or earlier
Group B- Full literacy achievable by around 1995
Group C- Full or high literacy achievable by around 2000

Sources:
1. *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, Paris. Relevant years.
2. Morrison, C. E. (ed.) *Asia-Pacific Report*. East-West Center, Hawaii, 1987.

ENGLISH READING SKILLS OF THAI UNIVI

The purpose of this study is to analyze the English written textbooks of Thai university students including their English reading ability and reading habits so that appropriate text development may be recommended.

METHOD

Subjects

Data for this study was gathered at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang in Bangkok. The population is 120 Junior Year students who enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering in 1987. Such students had learned English for 11 years and their level was lower-intermediate. The sample were selected by random sampling.

Instruments

The sample was given a cloze scientific passage extracted from the students' text. They were also given a cloze non-scientific passage. A Reading Habit Inventory was also presented to the students. Besides, three English written textbooks were analyzed by Anderson's Readability Index-RIX (1982), an easy-to-use formula which had been employed in Thailand.

The data gathered from the students' performance on two cloze tests, Reading Habit Inventory and three texts were analyzed according to the following questions:
1) Are the current texts written in English for Engineering students appropriate to their reading abilities?
2) Can cloze procedure measure the readability of Engineering students' texts?
3) What is the reading habit of Engineering students at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology?
Each question was answered by a statistical analysis of performance data from the cloze tests, Reading Habit Inventory, and three textbooks. The statistical method used involves descriptive data of all variables.

RESULTS

The results of this study are as follows:

The Current Texts of Thai University Students

Question 1: Are the current texts written in English for Engineering students appropriate to their reading abilities?
For this question, I use RIX Readability Index of Anderson (1982).

Firstly, I select three samples of sentences from three texts entitled "Process Control" by Harriot Peter, "Process Control System" by Shimskey and "Automatic Control System" by Benjamin Kuo. Each sample consists of 25 sentences from each book.

Secondly, for each sample, I count the number of sentences and number of long words. I get 25 sentences from each book. Then I determine RIX by dividing the number of long words of 7 or more letters by the number of sentences after excluding hypens, punctuation marks and brackets.

$$\text{RIX} = \frac{\text{number of long words}}{\text{number of sentences}}$$

Thirdly, I interpret the value of RIX to Grade level of difficulty according to the following Table:

Table 1

RIX Scores	*Equivalent Grade Level*
7.2 and above	College
6.2 and above	12
5.3 and above	11
4.5 and above	10
3.7 and above	9
3.0 and above	8
2.4 and above	7
1.8 and above	6
1.3 and above	5
0.8 and above	4
0.5 and above	3
0.2 and above	2
Below 0.2	1

I found that the readability index of "Process Control", "Process Control System" and "Automatic Control System" are 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 respectively. This means that those texts have the difficulty level of college American students. But Thai university students' reading ability is different from American students. Therefore, we could estimate that Thai students in this study are able to read English texts of Grade 9 American students, being about four years apart.

Cloze Procedure and Readability

Question 2 : Can cloze procedure measure the readability of Engineering students' texts?
Two cloze passages (scientific and non-scientific passages) were given to the students. The cloze scientific passage is extracted from one of the students' texts.

The cloze procedure used in this study is the standard one that deletes every fifth word from a written selection and is given to the students with directions to fill in the blanks for the missing words. A paragraph of introduction is given before the selection, without missing words, so that the students can have some meaningful content before having to fill in the blanks. Scoring was based on whether the students replaced the exact word used in the original text.

When the cloze text is used for assessing how well students can read printed material, the results are interpreted in terms of the independent, instructional or frustration level.

For the purposes of this assignment the following criteria are used: 55% or more blanks filled in correctly are equated with

ERSITY STUDENTS

Siriporn Limtrakarn,
Thailand Reading Association

the independent reading level; 45% to 54% is considered instructional level; below 45% is considered frustration level.

Of the 120 KMITL students who were tested on the cloze procedure, 37% of those students tested scored in the instructional level, 5% scored in the independent level and 58% scored in the frustration level. This means that most students read at the frustration level.

The following table shows the value of mean and standard deviation of the subjects:

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviation of all Subjects

Variables	Means	S.D	Cases
Scientific passage	26.64	8.35	120
Non-scientific passage	15.59	9.45	120

From Table 2, the mean scores on the scientific and non-scientific passages are 26.64 and 15.59 respectively.

Reading Habits of Engineering Students

Question 3: What is the reading habit of Engineering students at King Monkut's Institute of Technology? The Reading Habit Inventory was presented in English to the students. Each student has to check his RHI which comprised 25 items. For each item, the students have to check under Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Usually or Always, in relation to the reading of books in Thai and in English. Then the data gathered from those students were analyzed according to the reading technique, visual efficiency and emotional factors which may aid or hinder their reading efficiency.

The directions are: "Check the RHI below and then analyze your reading habits according to the guidelines given. Do not omit any of the items. Be truthful and utterly realistic. Represent your reading habits as they actually are." The items are as follows:

1. When I pick up a page of print, I notice the paragraphs specifically.
2. I read as I drive, with varying rates of speed, depending on varying reading conditions.
3. While reading, I find it easy to keep my mind on the material before me.
4. After I have been reading for a while, I stop reading for a few moments and rest my eyes by looking at some distant object.
5. I am alert to the role which punctuation plays in aiding me to get the meaning.
6. When I pick up a piece of reading matter for the first time, I look for certain specific items which will aid me in reading the piece more efficiently.
7. I read a group of words at one glance.
8. I notice a distinctive style or flavor of the author.
9. I enjoy reading.
10. I can read for long periods of time without a feeling of eye fatigue or tiredness.
11. After I read a paragraph, if required to do so, I could sum up the main idea clearly and briefly in my own words.
12. I make a practice of skimming articles frequently.
13. In reading a paragraph I usually try to see the organization of its thought content: I look for the main idea, and the details which support it.
14. I do not lose my place, or skip words or lines, while reading.
15. I am mildly conscious of grammatical structure while reading.
16. I feel comfortable and perfectly at ease while reading.
17. In reading larger units of writing (articles, chapters, etc.) I try to see the outline and total structure of the author's thoughts.
18. I have little difficulty in remembering what I read.
19. When I read, especially for any length of time, I make sure that the page before me is adequately illuminated.
20. When I read, I am reading for some definite purpose, and I try to keep that purpose clearly in mind as I read.
21. I read the preface of a book.
22. In reading more difficult material, after reading a paragraph or a section, I pause to summarize in a momentary flashback the material I have just covered.
23. While reading, I am aware of questions which rise in my own thinking about the material being read.
24. While reading, I hold the page 15 to 20 inches from my eyes.
25. I am aware that with practice a person can improve his reading skills, and I make a conscious effort generally toward that end.

To analyze the students' reading habits: each student carefully checks on the chart below, under the numbers of the item of the Inventory statement, the category (Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never) as he marked it in the Inventory above. Out of the 25 items that he marked, certain of them attempted to appraise his habits associated with certain specific reading techniques. Other items attempted to evaluate the more important matters associated with ocular hygiene and visual efficiency. Finally, a few items sought to probe some of the emotional factors which may aid or hinder his total reading efficiency.

There is a "Danger Line". As he transcribes his check marks from the Inventory above, he will find that he has checked above or below this danger line. The check marks below the danger line indicate that in these matters he needs to give attention to his reading habits and practises. He tries to put into practice each time he reads, the procedure suggested by Inventory statements of those items which he has checked below the danger line.

When he gets total number of check marks in all three charts above the danger line, he divides 25 into the total number of check marks he has above the danger line. This will give him a percentage score of desirable reading habits.

Chart 1

1. What does the Inventory indicate as to my reading technique? To find out, transcribe a check mark from the Inventory to the proper box in the chart following:

Item No.	1	2	5	6	8	11	12	13	15	17	18	20	21	22	23	Total
Always																
Usually																
Danger Line																
Sometimes																
Rarely																
Never																

Total number of check marks below the danger line:_____

Chart 2

2. What does the Inventory indicate about my visual factors in reading? Check the following chart to find out:

Item No.	4	7	10	14	19	24	Total
Always							
Usually							
Danger Line							
Sometimes							
Rarely							
Never							

Total number of check marks below the danger line:_____

Chart 3

3. What does the Inventory indicate about my emotional factors in reading? Check the following chart to find out:

Item No.	3	9	16	25	Total
Always					
Usually					
Danger Line					
Sometimes					
Rarely					
Never					

Total number of check marks below the danger line:_____

Total number of check marks in all three charts above the danger line:_____

Divide 25 into the total number of check marks you have above the danger line. This will give you your percentage score of desirable reading habit:_____%

The results are shown in the following Table.

Table 3

% of good reading habits	*number of students*
70	5
65	10
56	15
45	30
42	45
30	15

Table 3 indicates that only 25% of the students get their percentage of their desirable reading habits of 60-70%.

RECOMMENDATIONS

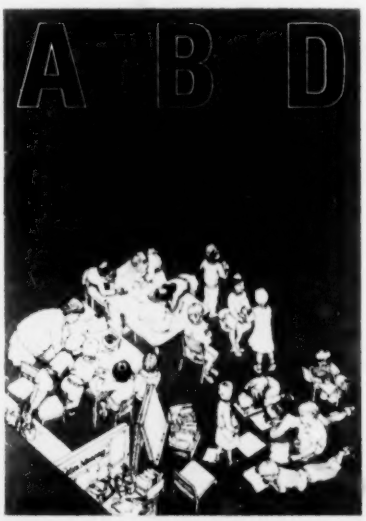
1) From this study, cloze scientific and non-scientific passages are reliable and can measure the readability of students' texts. Students at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang are weak in general English. Therefore, language teachers should put more emphasis on general English for their students.
Motivation is important in learning a foreign language. Therefore, teachers should motivate their students to learn English. Besides, teachers should train their students to determine beforehand their goals or expectation for a given reading activity.
2) Textbooks for Engineering students should be easier to read than the current texts. Teachers of Engineering courses should be aware of the difficulty level of texts assigned to their students.
3) Since most students have undesirable reading habits, teachers of English should emphasize reading techniques suitable to their students. Students at this institute should be trained on good and efficient reading techniques such as SQ3R, Dynamic Technique etc. until their English reading skills are improved.
4) Teachers of English, especially English reading should be knowledgeable about the Readability Index in order to select the reading materials suitable for their students. Furthermore, they should be good readers and teach their students to read efficiently and critically.

Jonathan Anderson. "A Little-known readability index that is quick to use, reliable and easy to interpret", *Journal of Reading*, 1982.

Larry Chance. "Use cloze encounters of the readability kind for secondary school students", *Journal of Reading*, V.28, No.8, May 1985.

Martha Combs. "Modeling the reading process with enlarged texts", *The Reading Teacher*, V.40, No.4, January 1987.

Asian Magazines on Literacy:



ASIAN/PACIFIC BOOK DEVELOPMENT

Published by the Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco (ACCU).
Address: 6 Fukuromachi, Shinjuku-ku, Toyko, 162, Japan.

THE ABCs OF THE READING ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

Lina B. Diaz de Rivera,
Reading Association of the Philippines

A - The ASSOCIATION is a professional organization of teachers of reading in the Philippines.

B - A BOARD of Directors, the governing body of the RAP is composed of 15 members duly elected by regular and life members of the Association.

C - COMMITTEES are formed within the Board for more systematic handling of work.

D - A DEMO-Fest highlights the midyear activities of the Association.

E - The RAP also aims for EFFECTIVE and EFFICIENT teaching of reading.

F - It was FOUNDED in 1970 with Dr. Aurora H. Roldan as President.

G - The GIFTED as well as the pupils needing remedial teaching are the concerns of the RAP's programs on instruction.

H - The Association believes in the principles of HUMANISTIC teaching.

I - The Association is an affiliate of the IRA, the International Reading Association which is based in Delaware, USA.

J - The yearly RAP JOURNAL, given free to all members, features articles on reading education written by experts here and abroad.

K - KEYNOTE speakers at RAP conventions and seminars are leaders of the community from diverse fields, though notably of education.

L - LITERACY in both Filipino and English is the focus of the RAP's programs now and in the immediate future.

M - MEMBERSHIP is open to all teachers of reading from the pre-school to the tertiary level. It is also open to all other persons who value reading.

N - The RAP is a NATIONAL organization. Its members come from all regions of the archipelago.

O - Its OFFICERS include a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Auditor.

P - The promotion of PROFESSIONAL GROWTH in the discipline is a priority of the Association.

Q - QUALITY teaching in the subject areas through reading is one of the goals of the Association.

R - The RAPPORTEUR, also given free of charge, is the semi-annual bulletin of current information on reading and the people who make it grow.

S - SUMMER is the time for the annual conventions of the RAP.

T - "Every TEACHER is a reading teacher." This, the RAP fully believes.

U - UNDERSTANDING the child as a person is a key to success in reading instruction.

V - VALUES development through reading is top priority in reading education.

W - There is a WRITING connection with the First R.

X - For the RAP, the X-FACTOR in any teaching-learning situation is the teacher.

Y - The YEARLY membership fee is P30. Lifetime membership is P300.

Z - ZEAL is the middle name of every RAP member. Will you be one of us?

IDAC SEMINAR

22-23 March 1990, Asia Hotel, Bangkok

The International Development in Asia Committee is going to hold a regional seminar in Bangkok to mark International Literacy Year. The keynote address on 'Reading Development in Asia' will be given by a representative from Unesco. Country papers will be presented by Dr. K.G. Rostogi (India), Mrs. Neelam Hussain (Pakistan), Dr. Seok Moi Ng (New Zealand) and Mr. Sunthorn Sunanchai (Thailand). Other speakers and discussants include William Cheng (Hong Kong), Ronald Brown, Safiah Osman (Malaysia), Nighat Ali (Pakistan), Maha Sripathy (Singapore) and Armeda Reitzel (USA). There will be a group discussion on the topic of 'Developing of Research Projects on Reading in Asia: Possibilities and Means of Co-operation'. Dr. Siriporn Limtrakarn, Chairperson of IDAC, will preside over the seminar and welcome the participants.

Australian Reading Association

15th National Conference On Literacy

National Convention Centre
Canberra - 4th to 7th July 1990

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF LITERACY

Interested personnel are invited to submit proposals for presentations within the following range of topic strands

Parents, the community and classrooms. Literacy learning as a social process. Issues in evaluation and assessment. Adult literacy and literacy in the workplace. Technology and media in literacy education. Literacy in multicultural contexts. Aboriginal literature. Aboriginal literacy. Literature and literacy. Literacy education and teacher education. Gender and literacy.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals may be submitted in the following categories:

Session presentation (1½ hours duration). Symposia. Proposals for symposia presentations should reflect an issue appropriate to a conference theme that the presenter wishes to raise and speak to for 15-20 minutes). Workshops (1½ hours duration). Institutes (whole or half day programs).

To obtain a program proposal form containing detailed submission information please write to **Brian Gray, School of Education, CCAE, P.O. Box 1, Belconnen ACT, Australia 2616.**

EARLY REGISTRATION INCENTIVE

If you are among the first 100 delegates to register for the conference you will be included in a draw to receive the following registration gifts. Complementary registration, free five star accommodation at the magnificent Capitol Park Royal Hotel adjacent to the National Convention Centre (for 3 nights) AND one free ticket to the President's Reception AS WELL AS one free ticket to the Conference Dinner to be held in the architectural splendour of the new Parliament House amid some of the art treasures of the nation.

REGISTRATION FEE

ARA/NZRA/IRA members $AUD154.00. Non-members $AUD191.00

A cheque for $AUD ____ is enclosed for early registration

Make cheques payable to 15th ARA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

(Information on SPEAKERS, Social Programs, and accommodation will be provided later)

Surname ____ (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

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CANCELLATIONS AND REFUND POLICY

Note: A $21 processing fee will be charged by ACM for all cancellations. No registration refunds will be given after 15/6/90.

WHAT IS CBA?

Dhammadesha Ambalampitiya,
Colombo Book Association

The Colombo Book Association (CBA) was established in 1983 as a result of a joint workshop on Production of Children's Books in Sri Lanka, co-sponsored by Unesco and the National Book Development Council of Sri Lanka. The Association is a non-profit making organisation. It is the largest readers association in Sri Lanka.

The main objectives of the CBA are as follows:

1. To effectively implement programmes for intellectual children in the island.
2. To improve reading habits of children.
3. To increase the production of books suitable for children.
4. To create interest in good writers and of their works.
5. To promote the concept of peace, mutual understanding and human love among growing children.

Presently there are 25,000 members registered with the association from various parts of Sri Lanka, who enjoy the facilities of reading books obtainable from the village level libraries or getting books by post direct from the Colombo headquarters without paying postal charges.

During the past five years CBA has implemented a number of literacy programmes to promote the standard of children's books and general reading habits in children. Following are some of our major services:

1. Maintaining 75 libraries which have already set upon special programmes.
2. Introducing World Children's Book Day to Sri Lanka as declared by UNO (April 2nd to be the world Children's Book Day). Today it is remembered almost as a national festival of literature.
3. Organising annual work-shops and seminars on Children's Book Production during the first week of October. To date 210 such writers for children have been trained. It covers about 60% of the total number of writers in the island.
4. Holding annually competitions in art works, drawings, essays, and manuscripts of children's literature.
5. Best manuscripts selected by a panel of an independent jury comprising eminent scholars are published and distributed in various districts of the island. Up to now 80 such publications for children have been released.
6. 'New Awakening' our offical news bulletin has rendered a service in the past years in giving publicity to amature writers and their materials.

The CBA has already conducted four international workshops since 1985 to train and motivate authors in writing children's books, with the active participation of representatives from India, Norway, Belgium, Indonesia, Germany and Russia. CBA commemorated The International Children's Book Day for the last five years with the participation of children representatives from all over the country.

We were also able to send three children representatives as members of CBA to participate in children's camps held in Vienna in 1986 and Finland in 1988. Children of Sri Lanka with their insular nature have a deeper curiosity to learn about the geographical backgrounds of other countries. Therefore we are trying our best to send a few children annually to participate at international organisations. We wish to invite the kind attention of literary organisations in other countries to consider providing facilities for children selected this year to tour your country by your organisation.

Further we have held island-wide competitions among authors to write children's books. The best scripts selected have been printed and published by the CBA, priced to cover the printing cost only.

We organised educational books exhibitions in the schools situated away from the Colombo city through the courtsey of the Minister of Education, in order to make available the required books at a nominal rate.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE PRODUCTION OF CHILDRENS BOOKS. OCTOBER 1988

Sri Lanka's population is about 16.8 million and the literacy rate is 86%, literacy defined as the ability to read and write. The total children population is about 4 million. Since 1900, about 850 titles have been published for them.

However, the number of books available now is fewer than 500, the rest being out of print. Also most of the publications are not in conformity with the modern basic requirements of child psychology.

There has been a felt need that writers of children's books should be given a basic training in the production of children's books.

With such concerns in mind, the fourth International Workshop was organised and held in October 1988. It was timed to coincide with the Universal Children's Week. Radios and newspapers helped to publicise the event by organising programmes which were connected with it.

It is a pre-requisite for any selectee to have published a children's book or to have obtained recognition or to show special aptitute for writing children's books. About 200 applications were received but only 50 trainees were finally selected due to limited resources. They were students of special ability, principals of schools, lecturers in universities and reputed artists. In addition, another 10 were selected from among the active organisers of the libraries and readers clubs being operated by the CBA. Full-time in-service residential training should have been provided, but due to inadequate resources, only a limited number should be given hostel facilities. Those coming from far-off places about 300 - 350 kilometers away from the training centre, the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, were given priority of accommodation.

The final selection of trainees was done by the mass media expert Edvin Ariyadasa and Professor Sunanda Mahandra.

The Workshop lasted for three days. The first day was set apart for an analytical study of the history of children's literature. The second day was devoted to the universal children's literature with the afternoon given to workshop acitivites. The third day was field visits and the award of certicates.

On 1 October 1988, the Workshop began with registration of trainees and the distribution of stationery and books containing lecture notes. Then at 8:40 a.m. the exhibition of children's books was declared open. The Director of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Dr. D. Wesumperuma received the Deputy Minister of Education Mr. Samaraweera Weerawnni and the invitees. Among the lecturers were the Deputy Minister of Education who represented the Minster of Education Services, Professor J.B. Dissanayaka, Mr Edvin Ariyadasa, Professor Thilokasundari Kariyawasam, Mr. H.M. Moratuwagama, Mrs Sybil Wettasinghe, Mr Leel Gunasekara, Professor Sunanda Mahandra and Mr. D. Ambalampitiya.

In the evening the trainees were taken to see the Government Printing Press which was fully equipped with modern machinery.

At the end of the third day, the Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs came to give out the award of certificates.

At the conclusion of the Workshop, it was commonly felt that it was one of the most well-organised workshops held in Sri Lanka. More facilities should be made available to the writers of children's books. Stationery and printing facilities could be provided for them to facilitate their work. More libraries and readers clubs should be instituted. Children's books should be made available at a cheaper price. The practice of giving a book present on children's birthdays should be motivated. Above all, workshops like this one and the past four should be longer in time.

CBA also hopes that in activities of this nature local and international organisations could cooperatie. Inter SAARC children's literary organisations, Unesco, International Reading Association can work more closely together. Competitions in connection with the 1990 Children's Book Day can be at an international level.

SEXISM IN THE TEACHING OF MATHEMATICS

Neelam Hussain,
Lahore Reading Council

An area of concern in the teaching of mathematics has been the low enrolment of females in higher mathematics courses. An interesting analysis of this dilemma has been presented by Johanna Kasin Lemlech in her book *Curriculum and Instructional Methods for the Elementary School (1984)*. According to author, in the year 1995, one out of every five people in the United States will be using computers. Consequently, in the author's opinion, careers in the late 1980's and the future will require people to have 'greater numerate capabilities.' Yet mathematics educators are concerned by the *small number of females enrolled* in higher mathematics courses. These courses are ironically considered necessary for advancement in careers in technology-based professions.

The author examines the sex-related differences in mathematics which were revealed by Fennema (1978). Fennema came to the following conclusions:

1. When both sexes study the same amount of mathematics, differences in their achievement are minimal.

2. Fewer females choose to study mathematics.

3. The failure to choose mathematics courses appears to be related to *lack of confidence* in learning mathematics and the belief that mathematics is a male domain.

4. Differential treatment of sexes by teachers may also contribute to the failure of females to choose mathematics education.

5. There are no *inherent reasons* for females' failure to learn mathematics at the same level as males.

6. Intervention programs can be designed to increase female participation in mathematics programs. These programs must include male and female students and their teachers.

The author proceeds to examine female enrollment patterns studies, which reveal that in all states studied, female seniors (in 12th grade) *are less prepared* than males.

In a study of mathematics achievement reported by Fennema *Mathematics Education Research: Implications for the 80's* (1981), the California State Assessment of Mathematics revealed that sixth-grade girls do better than boys in *computations* and one-step problems. Boys however outperformed the girls on items dealing with *spatial relationships* and *reasoning ability*. In geometry girls outperformed the boys on items that required recall and identification of geometric shapes. In *measurement* the girls scored higher on problems that dealt with money, but the boys did better than the girls on all other questions.

The author concludes by stating that a review of sex-related differences in mathematics reveals that fewer females enroll in higher level mathematics courses, and hence make themselves ineligible for career advancement and entry into new technological professions. She feels that there is a tendency amongst teachers to be insensitive to the need to encourage female students to take higher-level mathematics courses. In the author's opinion sex-related differences should be eliminated from mathematics education.

The article and related research make disturbing reading for educators at all levels. Sexism in the teaching of mathematics must be eliminated in order to meet the needs of a future society that requires people with greater numerate capabilities.

Low female enrollment in higher mathematics courses is thus not only a feminist issue but a societal one. Steps must be

taken *now* to educate society to examine their attitudes toward females in order to discover possible areas of discrimination. Along with this, there is a need to examine society's expectations for women, the type of encouragement given to them and the consequences of success for women.

Girls are conditioned from birth to be passive and encouraged to follow the feminine stereo-type. Boys however are given directions for independent activity and allowed to explore and discover. Consequently Serbin and O 'Leary discovered that girls' actions have far less effect on their environment than do the actions of boys. The kind of help each receives, encouraging action for boys, passivity for girls, also in their opinion seems to influence the development of their *spatial* and *analytic reasoning*. Boys learn to manipulate their environment, whereas girls learn to sit passively and watch the manipulation in frustration. This subsequently leads to the lack of preparation girls exhibit when they join higher mathematic courses.

The active involvement of girls in mathematics-related activity must be encouraged by teachers. The intervention programs designed to help female students, as suggested by Fennema, would definitely produce positive results.

The lack of confidence that females have about their ability to perform well in a male-dominated discipline (Math) can only be overcome when women receive positive messages from their environment regarding their worth. Society needs to recognize the role it has played in undermining female mathematics potential. It must bring about concrete changes in the existing state of affairs, by changing attitudes through systematic re-education of the people.

Schools must heed the research that indicates that when both sexes study the *same amount* of mathematics the differences in achievement are minimal. Programs must therefore be designed to encourage equal participation by both sexes at primary and secondary levels of education.

In-service programs need to be organized so that instructional staff learn to avoid differential treatment of students during mathematics-instruction.

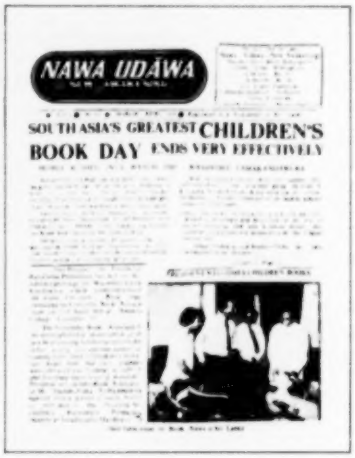
Administrators and educators need to be sensitized to the fact that there are no inherent reasons for the failure of females to learn at the level of males. It is merely the result of reduced expectation and preparation.

A female who is motivated to achieve contradicts the feminine role expectation that society has of her. Horner has very aptly stated, "A bright woman is caught in a double bind. In testing and other achievement oriented situations, she worries not only about failure also about success." The solution for this for most women is to inhibit success (Horner, 1968).

Secure, self-sufficient, self-actualizing women are not supported by society. Research indicates that patterns for men's success are *straight*, conventional and encouraged by society. Women's patterns of success are far more *complicated* and even success can bring failure.

The issue of the underachieving female should be examined

Asian Magazines on Literacy:


NAWA UDĀWA

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NEW AWAKENING

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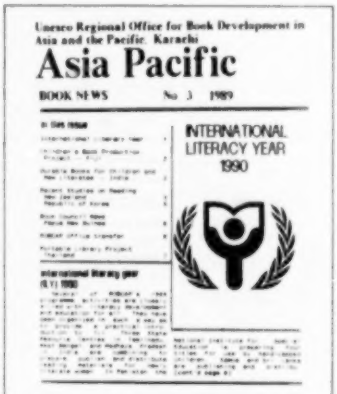
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Asia Pacific

BOOK NEWS No. 3 1989

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR 1990

ASIA PACIFIC BOOK NEWS

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IN MEMORIAM

Ronald W. Mitchell
1935-1989

Executive Director,
International Reading Association

ASIAN LITERACY & READING BULLETIN NO.4

November 1990

ASIAN LITERACY & READING BULLETIN

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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR 1990

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF IDAC

Dear Colleagues:

It gives me great pleasure to write a few lines to you. I would like to extend my best wishes to each of you.

The Asian Literacy and Reading Bulletin has provided a forum for the dissemination of information about the efforts in combating illiteracy, the sharing of research findings and the discussion of cooperative projects. I am pleased that there is greater cooperation among different councils in the common goal of promoting literacy in Asia, especially in the year of 1990 which is International Literacy Year.

IDAC Seminar on "Reading Development in Asia" was held in Bangkok, March 22-23, 1990. It is a successful conference. This regional seminar marks the International Literacy Year. The IDAC members have also made an agreement on the joint project "Reading Researches in Asia: Data Bank" at the IDAC Seminar in Bangkok.

Hopefully, this joint project will be tremendously beneficial to Asian people.

Thank you very much for your contribution and cooperation.

All the best,

Siriporn Limtrakarn

(Assoc. Prof. Dr.Siriporn Limtrakarn)
Chair, International Development in Asia Committee

THAI LITERACY ACTIVITIES

SIRIPORN LIMTRAKARN
IDAC Chair

CURRENT LITERACY SITUATION

Definition of Literacy

The official definition of literacy used by the National Statistical Office in conducting national census is the ability to read and write in any language, not just the national language. illiteracy was determined, therefore, by asking a person 10 years old and above whether he or she can read and write in any language. When reporting on the official statistic of illiteracy, the above definition is used.

The Ministry of Education, however, in attempting to identify target groups for literacy programmes specified the priority target groups as follows:

1. Those who have not completed Grade 4 of primary education; and
2. cannot read and write simple Thai language; and
3. are within the ages of 14-50 which are beyond the compulsory education age level and are within primary working age groups.

This definition is not the national official definition but is the operational definition used in literacy programmes organized by the Ministry of Education.

Current Literacy Statistics

When the first national census was conducted in 1938, over 68.8 per cent of the Thai population over 10 years of age or 6,879,007 million people were found to be illiterate. The expansion of the primary education over the subsequent years and the out-of-school literacy education efforts gradually lower the illiteracy rate to 10.5 per cent in 1980.

TABLE 1: ILLITERACY RATES BETWEEN 1937-1980

Year	Illiterates as a percentage of population		
	Male	Female	Total
1937	52.7	85.1	68.8
1947	32.6	59.9	46.3
1960	19.4	39.0	29.2
1970	11.1	25.2	18.2
1980	6.9	13.8	10.5

In spite of the impressive progress over the past 40 years, 3.5 million people continued to be found illiterate. As indicated in table 2 below, over 400,000 of these illiterates are youths, around 1.6 million people are below 50 years old and around 67 per cent are women.

TABLE 2: POPULATION 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER BY LITERACY, AGE GROUP, AND SEX, 1980

Age Groups	Number of Illiterates		Illiteracy Rates	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
10-14	87,979	96,198	3%	3%
15-24	119,461	190,494	2%	4%
25-39	170,149	330,796	4%	7%
40-49	173,058	355,108	8%	17%
50 and over	586,996	1,370,544	24%	51%
Total	1,137,643	2,343,140	6%	13%

Source: The National Census 1980

Highlights of the Problem of Illiteracy

Thailand is fortunate in that the majority of the population speak one common language with a uniform writing system. Even so, there are 4 major varieties or dialects of Thai spoken in the Northern, Northeastern, Central and Southern regions but they are mutually intelligible, thus presenting relatively few problems in communication.

There are, however, minority groups living in Thailand that have their own languages totally different from the Thai language, these are:

—The Hill-Tribes of the North Their number is estimated at 400,000 to 500,000. They are nomadic in their life-style. There are 6 major tribes living in small settlements among the hills of Northern Thailand, mostly inaccessible by road. Some of them can speak Thai, but almost all are illiterate as they have no written languages apart from the use of Burmese, Roman, or Chinese scripts among the learned few. It is estimated that around 15 per cent of school-age hilltribe children are in schools. The majority of the hill-tribesmen are not registered citizens so their statistic have never been included in the national census survey.

—The Khmer Speakers of the Border Areas There is no estimate available as to their number but they live in 4 Northeastern provinces bordering Kampuchea. Most of these people have lived there long enough to be able to speak Thai.

—The Malay Speakers of the Southern Provinces The 1970 National Census revealed that 74 per cent of the population in 3 provinces along the Southern border

are of Malay ethnic origin who are Muslims by faith. A total of 63 per cent of the total population, or approximately 400,000 persons, of the 3 provinces who are over five years of age do not use Thai in their daily communication.

Perhaps the problems with minority groups are reflected in the different regions of the country. According to statistics in 1980 the illiteracy rate found in the South is about 21.3 per cent in the North is 19.9 per cent and in the Northeast is 19.0 per cent whilst in the central plain it is only 3.5 per cent and in Bangkok only 1.7 per cent.

If we classify illiteracy rates by sex, it is found that the illiteracy rate of women is higher than that of men at a ratio of about 2:1 as shown in table 2.

Illiteracy rates are higher among elder generations. Although primary education Compulsory Education Act was promulgated in 1921, primary schools reached every part of the country only in the 1940's. Even then, a large number of children were deprived of primary education due to reasons of poverty, lack of school facilities within their proximity, frequent family migrations, cultural and ethnic barriers. Girls, in particular, had suffered from inadequate childhood education resulting from the needs to help with family chores, their sacrifice for education of the male siblings and lack of recognition for women's education among the parents.

It is important to note that the illiteracy is also caused by relapse to illiteracy. A study conducted by the Ministry of Education in 1969 found that around 33 per cent of primary school graduates reverted back to illiteracy over the period of 1-3 years after leaving schools. A similar study conducted 10 years later found considerable improvement in retention rates, yet over 19.2 per cent of Grade 4 graduates continued to revert to illiteracy as opposed to 5.6 per cent among Grade 6 graduates.

LITERACY ACHIEVEMENTS

By 1985, over 100,000 new literates had graduated from the National Literacy Campaign.

On the average the literacy achievements of the campaign graduates were found to be comparable to the third graders in the primary schools. When the literacy retentions were assessed, some relapse were found as follows:

	Reading Score (Total Score 20)			Writing Score (Total Score 20)		
	Original Score	At the Time of Followup	or	Original Score	At the Time of Followup	or
Graduates after 3-6 months	18.38	14.36	4.02	18.22	12.06	6.16
Graduates after 6 months-1 year	17.40	14.47	2.93	16.75	12.46	4.29
Graduates after 1 year	16.00	13.88	2.12	18.85	11.55	4.30

When literacy retentions were further assessed in the fourth year evaluation, it was found that 53 per cent of the graduates can read fluently, 36 per cent can read with some difficulty and 11 per cent have relapsed into illiteracy.

CONCLUSIONS:

When asked about the use of literacy skills in their daily lives, the graduates reported in a variety of ways: reading billboards (71 per cent), reading newspapers (56.30 per cent), reading medical prescription (74.2 per cent), travelling alone (42.3 per cent), filling forms (34.8 per cent), writing letters (30.0 per cent) and teaching others (39.9 per cent).

From the campaign evaluation, it appeared quite evident that the impacts of campaign extend beyond mere literacy acquisition. Most learners reported to gain greater self-confidence about their abilities to overcome their shortcomings in lives. The volunteers, on the other hand, indicated that they also had improved their literacy skills as well as increased their own self-confidence.

Attempts to eradicate illiteracy must take into account the multi-faceted causes and characteristics of illiteracy problem in Thailand.

The problem of school leavers and literacy program participants relapsing into illiteracy is widely known among educators. The solution should be this way: a minimum basic level of literacy and knowledge for everybody and availability of reading opportunities for all through public libraries, community school libraries, reading centers, mobile libraries and private bookstores.

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DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT IN EMERGENT READERS

Books! Books! Books. Developing INDEPENDENCE in Emergent Readers.

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Gordon shares a book with his cousin.

Although 'formal' reading education begins when children are 4 or 5 years old, their "educational career" begins at home with their parents and others as teachers. All those who come in contact with the child may contribute, consciously or not, to the child's information about print in this world. In a technological culture print exists in every corner of a child's world-on toys, signpost, television, food stuffs, clothes, and shopping centers. Yetta Goodman in 1980 explained the importance of such print and argued that we must look closely at the interactions of children with such print if we wish to understand the origins of literacy. Since then many research projects have answered this call and have provided evidence that the "emergence of literacy is facilitated by environmental print" (Hall, 1987, p. 29). In this article, however, I acknowledge the vital role in literacy growth played by meaningful interactions with such print but feel that environmental print is only one source of knowledge. I would now like to examine the importance of engaging young readers in independent book reading.

While the environment undoubtedly plays a role in the child's experience with written language, many parents and others in our culture read regularly to their children. There is no shortage of studies which have reported a positive relationship between children being read to during their pre-school years and success in learning to read. (Doake, 1981; Heath, 1982; Juliebo, 1985; Teale, 1982). By constantly listening to stories, children learn reading-like behavior such as mumble, completion echo and co-operative reading (Juliebo, 1988). A certain amount of caution must, however, be applied when considering such results. Are we then to believe that all children have had such a wonderful pre-school literacy experience and can engage easily with school materials? Years of experience with primary one classrooms have confirmed my belief that we have a significant number of children in schools who are not likely to succeed in a primary one program for a variety of reasons. If these children continue unaided in the system by primary four a teacher may well have students whose reading ranges from 5-6 years (Clay, 1985).

On reflection, on years of working with children with difficulties in reading, I firmly believe that many of these children do not progress because they have not experienced independent success with reading texts that interest them. Bethleheim and Zelan who are very critical of making children fit basal materials assert that good readers develop, often not as a result of good schooling, but rather the result of good experiences outside school. Through these experiences attitudes have developed "which these children acquired and maintained despite the experiences to which they have been exposed in schools" (1981, p.9).

A crucial question emerges: How can we as teachers help such children as Gordon (age 2 1/2 years) move from shared to independent reading? Holdaway (1980) maintains that "independence is vital to efficient learning at any stage of a developmental process" (p. 35). His description of a individualized program has at its heart self-selection, active determination, self-pacing, self-evaluation and sharing.

Young children from birth appear to have the desire to learn about all facets of this world and despite their dependence on adults to answer their questions they seen to constantly strive to be "effective, competent and independent" (Donaldson, 1979, p. 118). From repeated book sharing children begin to desire to read by themselves and nothing succeeds like success as Bruner simply says "We get interested in what we get good at." Here I am of course differentiating between books that can be read to children and books that children can read by themselves. To become independently literate the children must of course move to the latter. Children who show the emergence of reading behaviors such as memorizing familiar texts, echo, completing and co-operative reading during book sharing, attempts at eye-voice matching and a willingness to predict unknown words "will be receptive to instruction that will help them to determine how print works" (Jewell & Zintz, 1986, p. 251). In mumble reading the child repeats the reader by mumbling just after the reader. Initial mumbles are often indecipherable. Echo reading is where the reader clearly repeats words they have just heard. With completion reading the reader pauses and the child complates (Doake, 1981). In order to check the development of reading behaviors a classroom curriculum must contain activities which enable children to show significant signs of growth. In the following chart I list reading behaviors and suggest suitable activities both to develop these and to give children an opportunity to display their learning in a variety of social situations other than final tests.

Monitoring Growth

Signs of Reading Growth	Facilitating Experiences
shows positive attitudes to books and print.	child shares a favorite book at circle time, selects books at choosing time, likes story time
reads and re-reads texts exhibiting reading-like behavior.	engages in Big Book sharing and partnered reading
writes and reads messages using letter-like shapes, letters, words, pictures	participates in writing centre which contains a wide variety of writing materials
sees reading as a meaningful part of life	plays with a variety of literacy materials during dramatic play, imitates adult literacy procedures.
reads along with a fluent reader	reads along with 'listen and read' tapes which contain stories read by uncles, aunts, grandmothers, etc.
	reads with a grade 6 buddy.
	participates during readings of enlarged texts.
	enjoys paired reading
displays directionality	tracks with a pointer during a Big Book experience, individual reading or paired reading session.
understands what a story is	contributes to a shared writing experience, dictates a story for language experience, participates in story composing during drama.
	guesses what will happen in a story.

Signs of Reading Growth continued	Facilitating Experiences continued
	'writes' stories
engages in mumble, echo and completion reading	Big Book experience, shared reading one-to-one with teacher or buddy
uses predictive strategies to approximate text.	completes cloze activities during Big Book experience and shared reading. shares a favorite book in a reading-like manner during circle chimes in with readings of predictable books.
reads environmental print.	points to print on a print walk.
	identifies products in photographs (environmental print book)
	includes environmental print in art work
	reads print in displays e.g. Our Favorite Cereals.
monitors on the basis of meaning	during shared reading asks questions
	links stories to their own lives
	comments that a story doesn't make sense substitutes words that make sense, tolerates mistakes, re-reads and reads on to decode words.
understands that print is consistent	during shared and individual reading recognizes the same word in different contexts.
	identifies omissions in a text.
	develops a sight vocabulary.
	points to familiar words in a text.
	slows early spelling development in writing.
	quickly reads common words,
uses word beginnings to decode. (first letter or first syllable).	while reading Brown Bear orally sees the word purple, looks at the picture says 'p,p' before saying, 'purple dog'.
begins to develop phonic generalizations.	uses creative phonemic spelling when writing, overgeneralizes rules.

In order, for children to use prediction well, the context of materials must be familiar to them. If this is so then their word recognition can be increased without the loss of meaning. At present, we have a wealth of literature suitable for children who have built up a repertoire of books and stories, have began to eye-voice match, have concepts about print, try to read and write by themselves and know some words and letters (McKenzie, 1987). Some students on entry to school are not at this level and need successful reading on a large variety of simple predictable texts both narrative and expository that are based on events in their own lifeworlds. Series such as the Ginn Get-Ready Books, Bill Martin's Instant Readers Level 1, The Ready to Read Series and the Read MORE Series attempt to meet this need.

If a book is suitable for independent reading the young reader should achieve a word accuracy of 90-95% by the end of a normal teaching and sharing session. This should be assessed in a one-to-one situation during a reading conference. "You cannot rely on a published sequence of material for the earliest lessons" (Clay, 1985, p. 55). The teacher is the expert chooser who must select suitable materials and help the child to chose materials he/she will be successful with. The reader's growth must of course be monitored so that text difficulty can be evaluated, individual progress noted and particular difficulties dealt with.

In summary if we wish to help emergent reders become INDEPENDENT it is crucial that we make available reading materials that both interest the child and are at such a level that he/she can read them with 90% and above word accuracy. By modelling with extensive book sharing and story reading of favorite books, the child will develop the desire to read for him/herself. With careful help and encouragement from a caring person this can be achieved relatively easily. Conflicts occur when we try to match children to materials which do not interest them and are at a level of difficulty where they cannot succeed. For many children lack of success at the beginning of reading instruction causes them great psychological harm. Books are such an integral part of schooling that if they do not produce satisfaction for the reader we cannot expect a "literate or educated community" to result. The responsibility lies with schools to restore the "pleasure of print," destroyed for so many of our students by irrelevance of materials, boredom and inability to decode and understand prescribed texts (Holdaway, 1980, p. 83-84).

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BOOKS AND READING IN GHANA

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The history, of the book and reading situation in Ghana, like that of most Anglophone states in Africa is closely connected with that of Christian missionary work, the development of education, the expansion in government business, the increase in the number of newspaper and other printing presses, the up swing in endogenous authorship, publishing, book manufacturing and distribution, as well as a steadily rising social awareness.

There are three main reasons why a section of the Ghanaian society has taken the book most seriously: (i) the euphoria of acquiring knowledge through the book is in itself admirable in that the more learned a person is, the more he is looked up to as an informed opinion-shaper; (ii) successful book study, which has been the main tool of formal education in the country has been the main tool of formal education in the country has also been the surest gateway to economic and social well-being far beyond the dreams of many in an essentially egalitarian society; (iii) constant reading usually after formal education tends to reinforce the resolve in forging an independent personal lifestyle in a society that is unevenly literate, used to conformity and in which old and new practices co-exist uneasily.

Indeed, literacy is as much needed in the process of formal and non-formal education and in religious evangelization as in government. The Bible and its reading has always underlain Christian religious evangelical work. The growth of government has stimulated printing generally.

The growth of printing in Ghana has no doubt been a prerequisite in the rapid expansion of endogenous authorship, publishing, book distribution and mass reading. The foundations for all these were laid in Ghana gradually but were most noticeable during the nineteenth century when both religious missionary work of diverse sort and the expansion of central government control over the southern portion of the country took a firm hold. During the first half of that century the Basel and Bremen religious missions had investigated at least three Ghanaian languages to some depth.

They were Twi, Ewe, and Ga and had by 1850 published four Twi spelling and reading books. They were followed by several other books by expert writers like Johannes Zimmerman, J.B. Schlegel, J.G. Christaller, D.L. Carr and J.P. Brown. In the meantime, the Methodist Mission had established a modest printing press at Cape Coast which the Basel Mission made use of as far back as 1951.

However, though by 1958-59 newspapers had been handwritten in Ghana, eg. "Accra Herald", this difficult process was eliminated by 1874 as evidenced in the printing of the bi-monthly paper "The Gold Coast Times". Still the printing that went on in the country between 1859 and 1874 was mostly for the production of newspapers and periodicals with a few books only for local schools and religious use in particular.

There was, however, a spectacular growth in the printing industry between 1907 and 1928 and then between 1932 and 1940 corresponding to the growth in government, industrial, commercial and other activities. But these presses were mostly for government business, that is, for the production of "grey" literature, business and commercial stationery. Then also during 1940 and 1960, many private commercial printing houses were established but most of them were not for book production except those that belonged to religious bodies, such as the Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic and Seventh-Day Adventist presses which produced and continue to turn out good books.

Book content and illustration were now no longer taken for granted in any way. It was a period that ushered in widespread reading that was created in no small measure by the successes of the adult education programmes of the times. The momentum of this development in the book and reading situation has kept pace in quantity and quality to the present day.

Previously, all that was needed was for the local author to prepare his manuscript, say, for school use usually at the basic education level with the educational needs of the "new" African in mind. The actual production, was, however, the responsibility of the overseas multinational publishers.

In 1970 the illiteracy rate in Ghana was 70 per cent in a population of 8.6 million. the estimated illiteracy rate in 1982 was 60 per cent in a population of some 12 million. Literacy campaigns and adult education programmes commenced in the country in the late 1940s; intensified in the 1950s. reinforced by the Accelerated Development Plan for Education in 1951 and crowned by the Education Act of 1961 which made education free and compulsory.

By 1960 when these literacy efforts were in full swing, only 10 per cent of the population was literate so the present 40-50 per cent literacy rate in the country is a testimony to the contributions made by both governmental and non-governmental literacy institutions.

A general observation can be made that the ordinary Ghanaian thirsts strongly for knowledge and recreation through the book but this is not much met because of the lack of the right type of books and their prohibitive prices.

DEFINING ILLITERACY IN A BORDER COMMUNITY

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Simplistic definitions of illiteracy are not helpful to literacy professionals working in predominately English speaking urban communities. These definitions are even less helpful to biliteracy specialists who work in post secondary educational programs in large urban communities located along the U.S./Mexico border. The diversity found among Hispanic residents in the El Paso-Juarez border community requires a different perception of illiteracy and literacy to fit real-world language usage prevalent in this bicultural, biliterate, and bilingual community.

The current definition of functional illiteracy, the inability of an individual to use reading and writing, is simplistic because it has been equated to norms and levels of mainstream America. The current definition implies high school drop outs, grade level equivalents, basic skills in reading, and standardized test scores. Moreover, there are socio-economic implications such as rural upbringing, limited income, unemployment and underemployment. Finally, the definition is associated with cultural values detrimental to language minorities.

When this definition is applied to the El Paso-Juarez international border, distortions arise due to the complex nature of dual language usage and learning. For example, although biliteracy is common in wide spread commercial areas and on several television channels serving both sides of the border, adult immigrants from Juarez and other areas of Mexico with variable literacy learning in Spanish are reluctant to credit prior knowledge of consumer products and entertainment trends learned in English only as valid for placement and instructional purposes. Furthermore, it has been customary for Juarez residents of varying school experiences to denigrate the quality of English language instruction in school in Mexico because it tends to be grammar instruction applied to literal translation. As a result, they prefer to start entry level English as a Second Language instruction in El Paso because they adjudge their speaking, reading and writing skills, on the whole, to be inferior to students of the United States.

The increasing importance given in language research and language education to the significant role of culture in literacy learning and usage is not a mere token statement in the border sister cities of El Paso-Juarez. The bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate community has endured for four centuries. In this kind of dynamic setting learning to use two languages to accomplish authentic sociocultural needs is an interactive process, not a case of learning a "foreign" language in addition to the "native" one like making a 'sandwich'. In effective written language usage bilinguals do not depend on literal translation. It is time-consuming and inexact. In fact bilinguals often lose track of the language or languages which support the thought processes.

Family Literacy is another area that is uncovering unexpected values affecting literacy learning. Although high degrees of literacy and schooling for Hispanic women has only recently become greatly acceptable in both cultures, female enrollment greatly outnumbers male enrollment in the majority of programs at the El Paso Community College. Large numbers of single female parents are not satisfied with traditional roles of housewife and passive recipient of government dole programs. They want to prepare adequately for enhanced career opportunities.

Intergenerational projects and other case studies of unschooled and underschooled adults reveal that Hispanic parents leave their children's learning entirely in the hands of the school. Immigrant parents value schooling highly, but they don't have the confidence in their literacy skills in Spanish or English because this literacy knowledge was not gained in school in the United States. Native born Hispanics with schooling in the U.S. but with less than successful work histories are afraid to do their children harm because obviously they didn't learn the 'rules' correctly in school.

Another serious implication of the current definition of illiteracy concerns the immense social value placed on oral English skills to determine the quality of literacy learning in the United States side of the border. Different groups of immigrants and American born Hispanics don't flawlessly match native English speakers' standards in spite of degrees of biliteracy attainment. For instance, younger immigrants from Latin American countries tend to be very literate in Spanish and very successful learners in reading and writing in ESL classes as well. Nevertheless, because immigrants learned English from non-native speaker teachers, they believe the quality of oral English learning is very poor, consequently, border residents preoccupation with the mastery of oral English sounds minimizes real literacy learning.

Examples such as these add another dimension to adult language learning that is not addressed by definitions of illiteracy and the educational plans originally targeted for English monolingual populations. Because current practice in many communities is to channel persons into literacy development programs based solely

on standardized tests of English skills, often highly literate immigrants, disabled learners, unschooled adults, unemployed factories workers, and high school drop outs are all referred to basic literacy instruction. Such a practice overlooks the fact that language learning in any setting is the larger framework in which basic literacy development is but one of the components.

In the international border community there is a need to formulate definitions to clearly distinguish specific needs of distinct target populations. Linguistic, cultural, social and psychological diversity makes it necessary for literacy instruction to be linked to prior knowledge and existing language uses. The biliteracy specialists evaluate illiteracy as an adult individual's inability to use reading or writing in the primary language or any other language. In this definition, at least, an individual's knowledge of a language other than English is recognized. It is important to avoid the same trap as traditional or current definitions that are easily equated to graded levels. This definition has to assume literacy attainment in spite of the presence of social deficits such rural upbringing, low socioeconomic status, and unemployment. For the international border community biliteracy professionals assess literacy attainment in terms of degree of dual language usage, previous schooling history, work experience, and over all individual ability to cope with social needs such as consumerism. This type of differentiation during the evaluation and placement procedure can lead to relevant instruction in English as a Second language, remediation in English, special education, vocational training, high school equivalency, learning to read, or referrals to academic programs.

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

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What is vocabulary? Briefly stated, vocabulary refers to the area of semantics that involves words. In English, vocabulary is the stock of words that represent concrete or abstract concepts. Words have denotative meanings and may have connotative meanings. While denotative meanings are explicit and the same for most people, connotative meanings derive from the affective overtones associated with given words. Consider the word *school* which has a specific denotative meaning, but may have a positive or a negative connotation depending upon the individual's personal school experiences. Of course, words may be in oral or written form.

How do we acquire vocabulary? One way is as an indirect outgrowth of experiences. As we go through life, we have experiences during which words are associated with those experiences and with the concepts derived from the experiences. This is especially fruitful in the case of multiple-meaning words. Words with multiple meanings encountered in relation to different experiences lead to the acquisition of new meanings for words already known. An example is the word *bank* which differs in meaning when used in relation to a place where money is deposited, the land adjacent to a river, or as a verb in a sentence such as "You can bank on his word."

We also acquire word knowledge as an accompaniment to wide reading. The use of context clues plays an important role here. When words are repeatedly encountered in different materials, we make use of repeated context clues to figure out and reinforce the meanings of what heretofore had been unfamiliar words. The axiom thus is the more you read, the more your vocabulary will grow.

Dircet instruction is also an aid in vocabulary acquisition. It includes teacher-directed activities, published materials, taped instruction, computerized lessons and practice, and dictionary study.

What are the categories of vocabulary? There are two main categories: content words and structure words. Content words are the lexical or referential words of English. They comprise the large bulk of English words and provide the informational content of sentences and longer discourse. Included are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. These content words refer to people, places, things, actions, thoughts, feelings, sensations, qualities, etc., of the world and of experience. The structure words provide the framework for the lexical words in sentences. They are the grammatical or functional words of English. Although few in number (about 300), they are among the most frequently used words in both oral and written discourse. The traditional sub-categories are articles, prepositions, auxiliaries, modals, and conjunctions. Structure words can be classified according to function: noun markers (a, the, this), verb markers (is, has, can), phrase markers (in, up at from), clause markers (which, who, because), intensifiers or qualifiers (almost, enough, really), and question markers (how, what, who). Other subcategories include abbreviations, acronyms, foreign terms, and non-verbal symbols.

What are some techniques for developing vocabulary?

One way is through providing first-hand experiences through which vocabulary is associated with objects, actions, characteristics, emotions, or anything that is sensed and perceived. In conjunction with the experiences, someone (e.g., a parent, a teacher, anyone present at the time) names that which is being experienced. This usually is incidental rather than planned, but teachers should be alert to possibilities and take advantage of vocabulary enriching opportunities as they occur.

Vocabulary is also acquired through listening activities. We learn new words by hearing them used by others in meaningful contexts whereby we associate the new words with concepts. This includes listening to radio, television, story-telling, story reading, dramatizations, movies, conversations, and discussions. Word acquisition through listening is actually the earliest form of vocabulary development in children since that is how they learn to speak. It continues to operate throughout life in a mainly incidental, even subconscious way. When we hear words used repeatedly in meaningful contexts, we develop an understanding of those words.

Reading itself is a vehicle for vocabulary acquisition. Encountering new words in meaningful written context enables readers to associate meanings with them. Of course, the context must provide enough clues to a word's meaning. Consider the sentence where the nonsense word **gork** may be viewed as the unknown word: "I saw a gork." versus the sentence: "I saw a gork eating grass in the meadow." In reading, repeated encounters with a word that had been unfamiliar strengthens the association between the word and its concept and also extends the understanding of it if the word appears in different kinds of contexts.

Vocabulary growth through reading may be incidental, as a by-product of the reading activity itself, or it may be deliberate through direct teacher intervention. Such direct teacher intervention may be in the form of a vocabulary preview before pupils read a particular selection. It may be through the encouragement of pupils to use context clues to figure out what an unfamiliar word might be instead of just skipping over such a word. The teacher might instruct pupils to make a list of words they come across as they read that they will look up in a dictionary upon completion of the reading. Also, the teacher could encourage pupils to apply what they know about morphemes such as root words, prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings to help figure out word meaning.

Targeted instruction is a highly effective means for enhancing pupils' word knowledge. It encompasses the teaching of words through their interrelationships. These relationships may be in the form of common topic, common morpheme, synonym, antonym, object/function, present/past time, or symbol/concept. An example of relationship by topic is the linking of the topic "transportation" to nouns such as *vehicle, route, helicopter, tanker;* to verbs such as *meander, navigate, careen;* to adjectives such as *supersonic, subterranean, local;* to adverbs such as *recklessly, ploddingly, dangerously.* An example of relationship by morpheme is the presentation of the root *port* in relation to words such as *porter, report, deport, import, export, portable.* Synonym relationships abound in English (e.g., *rich/wealthy; late/tardy).* The same is true of antonym relationships (e.g., *seldom/frequently; youthful/aged).* An example of an object/function relationship is *stylus/cut.* The words *sleep/slept* represent a present/past time relationship while *swastika/Nazism* represent a symbol/concept relationship. Teachers can take a concept and then develop vocabulary related to that concept in respect to various kinds of the relationships described above.

Targeted instruction also includes homophones (*principal/principle*), homographs (*bow/bow*), and homonyms (*fence* -meaning variously a structure, a sport, or a receiver of stolen goods). Structure words, having less apparent lexical meanings than content words, can be developed through relationships such as time (*always, during*); sequence (*first, next*); place (*above, near*); quantity (*much, many*); purpose (*because, thus*); degree (*all, each*); cause (*since, therefore*); condition (*unless, where by).* These concepts need to be developed in natural grammatical structures and associated with the structure words that represent them. For example, a wooden block and a shelf could be used to develop space concepts such as:

The block is *on* the shelf.
The block is *beside* the shelf.
The block is *near* the shelf.

Time sequence could be developed in the following manner:

Put the small block on the shelf *after* you put the big block there.
Put the small block on the shelf *before* you put the big block there.
Put the small block on the shelf *at the same time as* you put the big block there.

It is important that teachers not assume their pupils understand structure words just because they, themselves, know these words so thoroughly that they have internalized them to automatic processing.

The understanding of both content words and structure words should be developed in the kinds of grammatical environments in which they naturally occur and which determine their meanings. The words should be associated meaningfully with experiences and with each other, both lexically and syntactically. New vocabulary should be used and become part of the individual's active vocabulary or it will be forgotten through disuse.

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in conjunction with Singapore National Reading Conference
13-15 July 1991, Marina Mandarin Hotel, Singapore

The International Development in Asia Committee is going to hold a regional seminar in conjunction with Singapore National Reading Conference. The theme of the IDAC Seminar will be "Reading Researches and Instructional Strategies: Asian Perspectives" and the theme of the National Reading Conference will be "Reading & Writing in a Multicultural Society"

For more details, please contact :

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Pholyotin Road, Bangkok 10900
THAILAND
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Third South Pacific Conference on Reading

"Making Connections"

13 – 16 January 1991

Rotorua, New Zealand

Third South Pacific
Conference on Reading

P.O. Box 42-087
Auckland 5
NEW ZEALAND

CO-HOSTED BY THE READING ASSOCIATIONS OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

CALL FOR PROGRAM PROPOSALS
SECOND NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE
ON
ADULT AND ADOLESCENT LITERACY

LAUNCHING THE LITERACY DECADE: AWARENESS INTO ACTION

Sponsored by the
International Reading Association
Banff Springs Hotel
March 21 - 23, 1991

The International Reading Association and collaborating organizations invite you to submit proposals for Symposia, Panels, Workshops and Sessions to be presented at the Second North American Conference on Adult and Adolescent Literacy, Banff, Alberta, March 21-23, 1991.

The theme **"Launching the Literacy Decade: Awareness into Action"** reflects the goals of the conference:

1. To continue the public awareness raising initiated by International Literacy Year and to begin to perpetuate the momentum throughout the Literacy Decade.
2. To inform a variety of constituencies about literacy issues affecting adult and adolescent learners within and beyond the classroom.
3. To enhance the networking of adult and adolescent literacy practitioners through information sharing and demonstration of successful programs, resources and practices.
4. To build links between adult and adolescent literacy concerns.
5. To exchange current literacy research findings for the purpose of sharing information, processes and expertise.
6. To generate action plans for future directions in adult and adolescent literacy research and practice.

The Program Committee will consider all proposals relevant to the goals and theme of the Conference.

For more details, please contact :

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Chairperson, Program Committee
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